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THE PERMANENT TRUTH IN THE IDEA OF NATURAL RELIGION

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THE idea of natural religion is one of those arresting ideas which never get fully defined but which nevertheless excite reflection and even controversy whenever they appear. The history of its life within the Christian tradition is a case in point; the idea has been taken as a foundation to be built upon, and it has been rejected as a combination of concepts involving the same sort of contradiction to be found in the notion of a round square. Natural religion has been appealed to as a touchstone of rationality and it has been attacked as illegitimate if not actually blasphemous. An idea capable of producing such reactions cannot be ignored.

A realistic approach to our topic bids us begin with two acknowledgments. First, natural religion has been understood in many senses and this has often led to confusion and discussion at cross purposes. Secondly, in the current revival of Protestant theology any idea of natural religion is anathema. Even more, there are those for whom religion itself is regarded as a merely "human" phenomenon which belongs to culture and is supposed to have nothing to do with God as understood in the Christian tradition. Such a beginning may not seem very promising, but it has the merit at least of being in touch with the facts, and, moreover, as F. H. Bradley reminded us in his own ironic way, "Where all is bad it must be good to know the worst."

My chief aim is to set forth what I shall call the permanent truth in the idea of natural religion. The problems leading to the proposal of the idea are perennial in character. They do not appear

only under this or that historical circumstance, merely to disappear like Palinurus beneath fresh waves of historical change. They belong instead to the nature and essential structure of religion in human life and history. Whenever the idea of natural religion is suggested, familiar problems are not far behind; the place of knowledge in religion, the relation between theology and philosophy, the bearing of pervasive experience and secular knowledge upon the claims of historically rooted religious doctrine. These problems confront us at present and they take on a new urgency because of the exciting developments witnessed by recent years in religious thought. The impact of, for example, the philosophy of existence and of the attempted recovery of the Reformation theology and ethos serve to raise anew ancient issues concerning religion, faith and understanding. It is clear that in the present state of philosophical, scientific and religious thinking, there stands above all others the perplexing question of the place of reason in religion and the extent to which theological doctrine can be maintained in isolation from both philosophical dialectic and the appeal to general experience and scientific knowledge. It would be a great mistake indeed if we should suppose that the present revival of theology entitles us to avoid the continuing problems involved. Before it is possible, however, to make clear what I take to be the permanent contribution in the idea of natural religion, its background must be explored.

The idea of natural religion is, as we all know, a very old one and, as we should expect, it has been subject to considerable reinterpretation in the course of its extensive history. It seems clear enough that the meaning it bore in the period of Enlightenment has been the decisive meaning for developments of the past two hundred years. Let us call the Enlightenment conception the classical conception of natural religion. The clue to that conception is found in the contrast which it implies. The meaning, that is to say, of natural religion must be sought in the nature of the religious form it was intended to exclude. As far back as Herbert of Cherbury in the seventeenth century, natural religion, sometimes called Deism, was understood as a body of beliefs based upon human reason and taken as independent of a special mode of disclosure commonly called revelation. Although these beliefs

were regarded as forming a unity distinct from any of the so-called positive religions, the claim was frequently made that the beliefs of natural religion represented what was common to all the positive religions. The implication was that the points in which the positive religions differed from each other are unimportant, belonging only to the particularity of historical circumstances as over against the universality of reason.

This conception of a natural religion was to suffer at least two crushing blows in the centuries to follow. On the one hand, the criticism of human reason at the hands of Hume no less than of Kant, led to a denial of the ability of theoretical understanding to reach any transcendent reality in a cognitive way. When Kant declared that he had found it necessary to deny knowledge of God and freedom to make way for rational faith, he was striking deep at the heart of the Deistic natural religion. He was in fact seeking to base religion on something other than either metaphysics or a general science of nature. Though he continued to speak of a rational or natural religion, he meant a religion based upon what he called the practical side of things. The upshot of the entire discussion was that for some, all discourse about the things of religion was said to be beyond human cognitive powers, while for others it seemed imperative that we have done with the dialectic of natural religion altogether and return to the idea of revelation. Still others sought to find a new foundation in experience, such as morality or art, in order to preserve the connection between religion and human experience without at the same time running afoul of the criticism which held that God cannot be an object of theoretical knowledge.

The second major blow fell in the nineteenth century when the historical consciousness and the historical dimension of life were thrust into the foreground. The idea of a universal human reason capable of working independently of historical circumstances and conditions became suspect. From various sides and for various reasons it was claimed that a universal human reason, if it is not itself an abstraction with no real existence, can at any rate reach nothing more than highly abstract truth. Not only was it held that reason cannot operate in a vacuum apart from historical circumstances and special interests — economic, political, social — but

it was claimed that reason cannot provide any content for itself unless immersed in historical action and decision. Here the situation of the previous century was reversed; instead of the distinctive features of religions being set aside as belonging to what is merely historically particular, these same features became decisive and the supposedly universal or common core of natural religious belief was itself rejected as abstract. The latter trend has continued into our own day and it is signalized by the current conviction that religion in the sense in which it is a pervasive phenomenon in human life belongs merely to culture and has no essential connection with the divine. According to this view we should cease talking about religion and confine attention instead to historical revelation as experience and record established by God alone and discontinuous with all human, finite and natural experience. Stated in its most extreme form, this view contends that Christianity is not a religion, since to classify it thus is to subordinate it to a general category, but revelation itself, opposed to all religion. To a consideration of the implications of this view, we must return.

There are several lessons to be learned from the historical development we have briefly sketched. Most pertinent to our present purpose is the discovery that the reality to which natural religion points cannot be adequately described after the fashion of the eighteenth century. The belief that a clear and unambiguous distinction can be drawn between a purely rational and, in this sense natural, religion on the one hand and a purely historical or revelational religion on the other, is based on an error. This is not to say that there is no distinction at all required, for we shall attempt to formulate one shortly, but rather to point out that the facts of the situation will not support the total separation which the older distinction required. Systematic, rational constructions purporting to be true of the real world are never self-contained expressions of reason; they always depend upon encounter with existing reality taking place under historical conditions. On the other hand, the revealed content which in the older theory stood in total separation from natural religion, could never have been received by the human mind with being expressed, interpreted and judged through forms and canons of human reason. The revealed content, more-

over, in order to assume its rightful status as religious truth, could not have been left in the form of historical record but it had to be formulated in rational concepts and endowed with such form as is appropriate to a truth making a universal claim. It appears that each side interpenetrates the other; reason is always dependent upon a reality encountered, and revealed or historical religion is dependent upon attaining to rational form. The inescapable presence of one side of an antithesis in the other suggests the illegitimacy of any attempt to present the two sides as totally disconnected.

Leaving to one side, for the time being, whatever difficulties are involved in the distinction expressed in the classical conception of natural religion, we must seek the reasons prompting it in the first place. What exactly were these earlier thinkers trying to express? What significant insights lay behind their strong conviction that the religious situation cannot be adequately summed up in the so-called positive religions alone? With answers to these questions in hand, we may return to our present situation and show how they bear on current Christian thinking.

There were in point of fact three main ideas that sought expression in and through the classical doctrine. All three were elaborated under the guidance of a more or less basic purpose largely political and even ethical in its import: the purpose of overcoming disputes based on theological differences. The insistence upon doctrinal uniformity, so it was generally believed, meant persecution and wars of religion. Natural religion was invoked as furnishing a set of general truths known to all or capable of being so known and transcending special, historically founded religious claims and interests. The selection of these common truths, moreover, was made in accordance with the idea that religion is primarily a practical affair whose main contributions are the molding of good citizens and the preservation of society. Important, however, as this motivating purpose has been in the development of religion since that time, more serious problems are contained in the three ideas at the heart of the classical conception.

First, there was the idea of a universal religion stripped of all particularity or provincial ties such as would serve to confine it to some particular group or class of human beings. Secondly, there

was the idea that personal, individual experience and understanding are essential to genuine religious faith and that these are threatened by institutional forms of mediation. Thirdly, there was the idea that reason as a trustworthy guide finds its proper locus in the universals or pervasive traits of human experience and consequently that differences in experience and doctrine derivative from particular, historical circumstances are to be disregarded as unimportant. Let us consider each idea in turn.

As regards the concept of a universal religion representing a distillation from particular religions of certain doctrines such as the existence of God and human immortality, two considerations are essential. A rational or natural religion so derived would, of course, be dependent upon the historical religions and their distinctive disclosures of God. The mark of rationality or the sign that we have here to do with a universal religion would be found in the doctrines held to be in common; rationality and universality, in the sense of the common core of belief, coincide. Such a religion could be said to be completely independent of the historical traditions only if its defining beliefs were formulated in concepts not themselves derived from or even in part constituted by beliefs peculiar to any one historical tradition alone. Thus, for example, to make good the claim it was necessary to hold that neither the concept of God nor the idea of divine worship was uniquely derived from Christianity. And yet from the historical facts, we know that this was not the case; the common core of rational religion was in fact based largely upon corresponding Christian beliefs. It even happened in some cases that Christianity was openly identified as the natural religion and attempts were made to show that it was "as old as creation." The conclusion to be drawn is that the position was unable to sustain its own dichotomy between the natural and the historically revealed.

The natural religion, moreover, could have no separate existence as an identifiable *cultus* or religious community, a fact which casts suspicion upon its right to be called a religion at all. A religious community and tradition are not created merely by a convocation of individuals ready to sign a creed or charter. Common experience and life are necessary and these cannot be supplied by intellectual agreements alone. Criticism and reinterpretation of an

already existing tradition are possible, but such criticism by itself does not constitute a religion. The natural religion of Enlightenment was either a philosophical doctrine unconnected with religious observance and functioning, or it was a special way of regarding the doctrines of the special historical religion in which the individual happened to stand. In the latter case, the natural religion was not determined independently of the historical religion and the hoped-for separation of the two does not stand.

The second of the three ideas behind what we have been calling the classical conception concerns the protest against institutional religion and its mediating function. In maintaining that religious meaning and truth must be apprehended by the individual through his own reason, the proponents of natural religion were in fact underlining the necessity of individual participation and personal involvement in the religious relationship. In many cases this meant a call, not for further separation from traditional religious doctrines, but rather for a closer association with them. Appropriation through reason and experience was thought superior to acceptance of religious truths at second-hand mediated by the "credit" or authority of the proposer. Curiously enough, Herbert of Cherbury did not hesitate to refer to such appropriation or apprehension by the individual through his own reason as a form of revelation or disclosure of God.

The possibility of such individual appropriation, however, points up the need for continuity between the experience and reason of the individual on one side and the proposed religious truth on the other. If a doctrine of God is to command the assent and allegiance of the person it must not appear to him as infinitely strange to his own experience and it must be cast in intelligible form. The nature of a rational being demands that whatever is proposed for acceptance by that being should be continuous with a rational nature. Kant expressed the point best in his doctrine of autonomy and heteronomy. Whereas heteronomy signifies that the human self is subjected to conditions that deny its own distinctive rational nature so that it is reduced to the status of a thing, autonomy requires that a rational being be treated in accordance with his own rationality and not in a sub-human way. Religion is possible only for rational beings; it would be a paradox beyond any of those

which so delight the contemporary theologian if, in the sphere of religious faith, man should be required to abandon his rationality. The classical conception of natural religion made provision against such a result through the doctrine of individual apprehension of religious truth.

The third idea underlying the classical doctrine is the most important of the three; it concerns the metaphysical basis of the entire contrast between religion natural and historical or revealed. It contains as well the main idea behind what I have been calling the permanent truth in the idea of natural religion. Natural religion, in virtue of its roots in reason, appealed to general experience of both the natural world and man; it did not confine itself to special experiences associated with historical personages or traditions. By contrast, revealed religion was taken as essentially historical and was thus seen as drawing upon events neither capable of repetition nor of exemplification in experience generally accessible across cultural lines. We are now in a position to state more precisely the meaning of the fundamental contrast in question. It concerns two different channels or approaches to God — the approach through repeatable experience and public knowledge and the approach through historical events and their records as preserved and interpreted by a continuing community or church. I propose to call the former channel the approach through *general occasions* and the latter the approach through *special occasions*. The natural religion was identified with general occasions and the historical or revealed with what I am calling special occasions. We must not, however, identify general occasions with nature understood as the physical cosmos in contrast to man, nor will it do to characterize special occasions as having to do with human experience alone as if these occasions were not permeated by natural structures and did not take place under the constraint of the general conditions surrounding all existence of whatever variety. The reason for this cautionary word points back again to the impossibility of sustaining an absolute separation between the natural and the historical after the fashion of the classical view. For the two interpenetrate each other as we have pointed out in several ways. General occasions must include all experience and this means that distinctively human experience cannot be excluded; a religion re-

maining in touch with general occasions will not be one based on the nature of the physical world alone, but it will have as part of its resources pervasive human experience as well. Special occasions, on the other hand, though they belong to the dimension of human history, take place within a natural setting and they do not escape the conditions of natural existence.

The proponents of natural religion had the true insight that it is man as man who is the religious animal and that the religious question arises out of man's situation in the world. This is not to say that religion is by any means a wholly human affair; there is no positive religion at all without a transcending religious object. But the essential point remains: man is the one being who has both the need of and the capacity for religious faith and insight. There are many aspects or dimensions to life in the world; man alone raises the religious question and reveals that concern for the ground and goal of his being which shows that life has a religious dimension. In supposing that man could answer the religious question and complete the religious quest merely through the exercise of his reason, the advocates of natural religion went too far. But in their demand that religious truth be intelligible, they saw that if the unity and integrity of the human self is to be preserved, the doctrines of religion cannot be left in a sphere totally foreign to human reason and general experience. We cannot be religious animals by parts and we cannot seal off the knowledge we gain from our participation in general experience from religious truths which we receive through an historical tradition. The two must interpret each other.

The full import of this latter point was not seen by the thinkers of Enlightenment because of their express aim of separating the natural from the historical. On the one hand they did not see that reason is but one of the sources of religious insight and therefore they tried to make it accomplish too much; they underestimated the resources of history and of the religious insights derived from special occasions. On the other hand they did see that reason and general experience are not only relevant to the grasping and appropriating of an historical faith, but that both are required for its interpretation and for continuing criticism. This point is absolutely basic and it forms one of the major issues in the revival

of theological thought that has taken place in the past decade. Are we to understand man's relation to God solely by reference to an historically instituted divine disclosure or revelation which is wholly discontinuous with human reason and general experience? Or, putting the question in another way, shall we declare that man's general experience and his reflection upon it are so radically set apart from the Christian conception of God that there is no bridge or point of contact between the two? There are those today, and the number seems to be increasing, who hold that Christianity is in no sense a faith which answers to a question and a predicament presented by man as a natural and rational being in the universe. They say that it has nothing to do with religion as a generic form or life, being instead a disclosure of God wholly from beyond man and his experience. As a result, Christianity is made to appear wholly disconnected with reality as experienced and known through what we have been calling general occasions. Revelation, on this view, belongs in a realm apart from that constituted by general experience. Revelation, moreover, although it comes as an alien body of ideas to a being who does not and cannot seek it of himself, is to provide the norm for all of our thinking. And, in addition, it is claimed that such revelation is not dependent either in its reception or for its interpretation upon human reason and knowledge. The divorce is effectively accomplished; not only is the revealed totally severed from the natural, but religion as a pervasive aspect of human life is set aside as a purely human or cultural phenomenon. The Christian faith is not then a religion besides others and it is not essentially related to any predicament or religious concern which man as natural creature exhibits. Human knowledge and experience have no essential rôle in interpreting and certainly no competence for questioning the validity of the revealed content. The final outcome is, as it must ever be with such scepticism, that Christianity is forced to rest on a purely fideistic basis and to make large use of the command to believe. It abandons, as apologetic beneath the dignity of revealed truth, all efforts at expressing itself intelligibly in terms borrowed from general experience and it refuses to allow any external criticism. Its appeal is the wholly positive one of appeal to revealed fact, excluding the relevance of science and philosophy and refusing

the possibility of justification from external sources. Such theology is the exact counterpart of a positivistic philosophy seeking to base itself upon either scientific fact or common sense alone to the exclusion of metaphysical analysis and criticism. Further reflection on this outcome would prove instructive to certain theologians and perhaps even to some philosophers.

The bifurcation in man's spiritual life implied in the foregoing position is a direct consequence of the attempt to sustain an absolute distinction between natural and revealed religion, between the special occasions of historical revelation and man's own nature and general experience. If the men of Enlightenment went too far in their attempt to base religion on reason and general experience, the dogmatic reaction to that attempt is not less one-sided. It seals off the Christian heritage from the very historical life and thought to which it was meant to be so intimately related. And indeed the situation would be less tragic were it not so obvious that the proposed bifurcation of our spiritual life is not and indeed cannot be sustained. No sooner do we propose to seal off a portion of our life from outside influence than we discover that the very attempt must be made by a mind that cannot function by parts nor can it will to set aside as irrelevant its own rational canons and cumulative knowledge. To think at all is to make use of natural and secular knowledge, so-called, not to be derived from Christian sources or indeed from any one religious tradition. To ask that the human mind operate as if it neither possessed nor required what it patently does have and need is akin to invoking an ancient recipe for dispelling a headache in which the sufferer is required to go about the house three times *without* thinking of a fox. But, again, if the dichotomy in question cannot in fact be sustained and the two sides continually interpenetrate each other, why may they not supplement each other and at the same time provide mutual criticism and clarification?

Recent years have witnessed concerted efforts to recover the classical content of the Judeo-Christian tradition and to set aside apologetic formulations. In this process of recovery, primary emphasis has been placed upon what is unique in the tradition and it has come to be accepted as a principle by many that the revelation of God is most clearly established at those points where the

ideas stand in the sharpest opposition to so-called natural or rational thought and expectation. It is this principle firmly fixed as a criterion that leads to the discontinuity already mentioned and to the consequent rejection as irrelevant to revelation of any appeal to general experience and knowledge. We must now show the inadequacy of this conception and at the same time show the inescapability of appeal to general experience, to man as the religious animal and to the fact that man's own nature in the universe requires that life have a religious dimension built into it.

The evidence of anthropology and the well known fact that no form of human society has ever been found which does not have a religious community in some form, can only lead to the conclusion that man is by nature a religious animal. He is, that is to say, the being who asks the question of the ground and goal of his life and exhibits a concern which betrays his radical need for some answer to his question and the overcoming or fulfilling of his concern. This means that there belongs to human life in the world as we encounter it, a religious dimension; above all of the special aims and activities of life there is a concern for our ultimate purpose in the scheme of things. This purpose is, as Van der Leeuw has expressed it, the "final word" because it bestows significance upon all of our finite concerns and does not itself need to be illuminated from beyond itself. No specific accomplishment is ultimately satisfying if life itself is regarded as without an essential purpose. Every man participates in the religious dimension of life and it belongs to the structure of human life as such. It is a pervasive feature exhibiting itself in every cultural form. Our knowledge of human experience shows that man does not wait for some special historical occasion of revelation before raising the question of God or before exhibiting that concern for ultimate destiny which is the hallmark of the religious consciousness. On the contrary, the raising of the religious question and the having of the concern are prior conditions of man's quest for a disclosure of God and a necessary background against which any such historical disclosure can be received and understood. Since the religious dimension belongs to life itself, it must stand in essential relation to whatever positive religious faith is proposed for our acceptance. If the quest for God belongs to human nature as such and manifests itself in gen-

eral experience, then the fulfillment of that quest cannot be received and understood apart from our nature and experience. The religious insights belonging to the special occasions forming the basis of Christianity must be received and interpreted by us through the medium of our reason and the knowledge we have derived from general occasions. We must now seek to determine more precisely the connection between general and special occasions.

There are four ways in which general experience and man's constitution as a religious animal have contributed and still contribute to the dominant religious tradition in which we stand. First, there is manifested in human life universally that question concerning ultimate purpose and destiny and that concern for resolving the question which defines the religious dimension of life. We betray our own incompleteness by our drive towards a final purpose. The religious question, as has been already emphasized, is not initially posed in the face of special occasions or revelatory events; it is rather a precondition of the quest for these occasions. Every fulfillment stands related to an expectation and to speak as though a given fulfillment could generate its own expectation is either to confuse us or to put the cart before the horse. Those who try to disconnect the revelatory events of Christianity from the conditions in human life which lead us to ask for the meaning which those same events are meant to convey, betray the very historical approach to faith which they would defend. If, for example, we are confronted by a doctrine such as atonement and our attention is directed toward the life and death of Christ as the historical basis for that doctrine, we cannot make one step in the direction of comprehending such a notion unless we understand through our own experience what guilt is and unless we can grasp, again through our own experience as human persons, what vicarious suffering might mean. We may not know the full proportions of our failures, nor the total potentialities we may possess apart from some insight into the divine nature, but it is surely folly to suppose that such disclosure simply breaks in upon us in a manner which totally ignores and negates our own reason and being. The religion of special occasions is always dependent upon interpretation through the experience and knowledge of general occasions. Were

man not by nature the religious animal, such interpretation would be impossible.

Secondly, the mind and self which are to receive a disclosure of God in a special occasion have already been informed by general knowledge of the world and man. The figure of the *tabula rasa* or blank wax tablet so cherished by later philosophers as a description of the receiving apparatus of the human mind, was just as erroneous a representation of things in the first century as it has been shown to be through the criticism of Kant and Leibniz. There is in fact no such blank tablet; there may be empty heads, but there are no empty minds. The natural conditions for all knowledge and experience determine that every encounter of reality by man is conditioned by the one who receives it. Such conditioning does not in any sense imply reduction of religious meaning to something other than itself, nor does it make its validity rest on irrelevant considerations. On the contrary, experience — including all the decisive and normative experiences that have served as media of revelation in the Judeo-Christian tradition — needs expression for the realization and continued contemplation of its meaning. Expression, in turn, requires a language, thought forms and categories; these essential elements are never uniquely supplied by the experience itself. They belong to the more or less perennial structure of the human mind and to the special features of the actual situation in which it finds itself at a given time. It was no accident, therefore, that those writers who first set out to express the true religious meaning of the set of events constituting the life of Jesus, should have employed concepts such as *logos* and symbols such as *light* in order to set forth the meaning of what they had experienced. These elements plus a great many others, including the assumed logic and common sense beliefs about the universe current in their time (e.g., that the world would soon come to a physical end), belong to the conditions under which human beings received disclosure of God through special occasions. Just as revelatory events are not self-interpreting, so they also do not carry with them the language and categories in which they are to be expressed. This is not to say that the use of the *logos* concept, for example, is no more than a repetition within the Christian context of a meaning to be found current among, let us say, the Stoics.

It was, of course, special to Christian insight that the *logos* became identified with a life and indeed with a death; there was through this fact a transforming and reshaping of the idea. This fact, however, does not obscure the equally important fact that the concept had its own meaning when it was taken over and that meaning could not have been purged away in the new context. There were reasons behind the selection of the concept as the Alexandrian theologians began to make explicit; it pointed to the intrinsic connection between a universal logos implicit in general experience — a *logos* of being — and its peculiar manifestation in the one who is received as the Christ. This connection, as we shall point out, not only allows, but even demands that there be continuity of thought between general experience and the interpretation of special occasions taken as the bearers of religious revelation. Whatever novelty may be delivered to us through special occasions cannot be wholly foreign to and destructive of general experience and the knowledge derived from it.

There is a third point at which the positive or historical religious tradition is dependent upon our rational powers and knowledge. A living religious tradition requires not only a repeated interpretation and reinterpretation, but, insofar as it cannot remain insensitive to historical change, it finds itself confronting new knowledge and novel historical situations. Such novelty presents both a challenge and a guide. When, for example, Augustine wrote Concerning the Literal Interpretation of Genesis, he could not foresee the situation which would confront a Christian standing in his own tradition trying to compose a work on the same theme in the nineteenth century after 1859. This is not to say that the theory of evolution uniquely determines what the content of theology shall be, but rather that advances in knowledge change our conceptions both of ourselves and of the universe in which we think and live, thus redirecting thought and refocusing issues. Insofar as these changes present a challenge to older interpretations, it becomes necessary to respond. And in so doing we are led on to new interpretations of ancient doctrines and to discover in them possibilities of meaning and implications that could not have been detected at an earlier time.

The medieval Christian thinker, to take another example, was

not yet confronted with problems posed by historical or so-called higher criticism. He was also not confronted with the Marxian or Freudian man and, of course, he had no opportunity for responding to such challenges. But a living tradition must respond to such challenges and in so doing it probes more deeply into itself, discovering further implications of its doctrine and setting forth new interpretations of traditional ideas. All great religious thought, though it appears, when well established, as the settled expression of a comfortable orthodoxy, was in its own time a constructive and creative response to a new situation and advancing knowledge.

Discoveries and novel developments in history do not always present challenges to religious truth. It has often been the case that new intellectual achievements have aided in the understanding of ancient religious wisdom. For example, despite difficulties and problems, the extension of critical historical methods to the interpretation of sacred literature has made a more subtle grasp of this literature possible. It has even laid the foundations for recovery of the idea that history is the medium of revelation. It is clear, moreover, that the development of German classical philosophy from Kant to Hegel and ultimately to the philosophy of existence, has left an indelible mark upon Protestant theology in the present century. The claim sometimes expressed according to which theology is supposed to develop in a completely internal way and quite apart from dependence upon either reason or secular knowledge, is a claim that cannot be sustained. Secular knowledge, moreover, is often of the first importance in bringing us to a clearer understanding of what is implied in religious truth.

The fourth way in which reason and general experience contribute to religious life and thought is by far the most fundamental. It introduces the thorny but ubiquitous problem of critical validation — the problem of religious knowledge. Ever since the beginning of critical reflection both in and about religion, men have faced the question: Have we knowledge of God or independent being and, if so, what is its nature and critical tests? Many different answers to this question have been given. One of the curious features of the present state of opinion is that from two quite divergent viewpoints, such knowledge is denied. A denial is defended not only by those who would confine knowledge to the

natural sciences and hand religion, along with ethics and politics, over to the essentially irrational, but also by dogmatic theologians of revelation for whom there can be no "natural" knowledge of God. If we may paraphrase the famous expression of Kant, the former find it necessary to deny knowledge of God and immortality to make way for science, while the latter find it necessary to do so in order to make way for revelation.

We cannot consistently maintain a total rejection or scepticism concerning human reason and man's natural religious concern, without incurring unwelcome consequences for theology itself. The more the power of human reason is impugned, the less possible does it become to defend the validity of religious knowledge. We cannot successfully establish revelation in a special sphere of its own, safe from critical attack, while at the same time joining with the secular mind in the thorough rejection of a reason which has metaphysical depth in it. If Christianity is to be more than a cosmic mythology, however important, an attempt must be made to express it in terms intelligible to our general experience so that we can understand how it might be taken as true and not merely useful. If it is the case, as indeed many signs seem to indicate, that the modern man has lost God, surely one of the major reasons for this loss stems from the increasing strangeness of the Christian ideas in a world dominated by highly abstract and technological modes of thought. The concepts of original sin, for example, or atonement, originating in events of a distant past, seem increasingly strange to a mind schooled in the belief that we know nothing except what can be discovered through manipulating things under strictly controlled and therefore artificial conditions. Is a solution to be sought in accepting a complete divorce and in retiring the religious ideas into a domain apart in which their truth is inviolate except that they no longer have any logical connection with our general experience and scientific knowledge? This solution presents itself as a happy one to many minds at present. And yet as we contemplate it, we should see at once that it is no solution. It is too easy; we cannot suppose that the perennial and much debated problem concerning the relations between religion, scientific knowledge and philosophy can be resolved merely by supposing that the three are all irrelevant to each other. Must we not seek

instead to overcome the gap between the modern mind and the classical Christian ideas by seeking to recover that dialogue between reason and faith which began with the Alexandrian theologians and ceased only when men acquiesced in that departmentalization of life and thought which has been among the major blights of modern times.

Here is the point at which we can see most vividly the contribution to be made by what I have been calling the permanent truth in the idea of natural religion. All claims to religious truth must be related to the fact that man is by nature the religious animal, the one who has the religious concern and who asks the religious question. We ask who we are, why we are and what the whole thing means. This *is* the question of God, and man, just because he is the one being who asks what it means to be, is the one being equipped to receive the religious answer. But question and answer cannot be located in two entirely different orders of being. If a religious answer represents the truth about man, the world and God, then it cannot exist in a realm apart — it must show itself in the nature of the world in which we live and it must be connectible with our experience and our knowledge. A religion purporting to be true of our cosmos and of human history cannot carve out for itself a special private world in which alone it appears true, while leaving the common world in which we all live to its own devices. This would be, as Kierkegaard vividly expressed the point in criticism of Hegel, to abscond to the realm of pure being while leaving the rest of us to face the worst!

Let us attempt a brief summary of our conclusions. In the first instance, the classical distinction and separation between natural and historical religion cannot be sustained. One consequence is that there is no natural religion in the sense of our constructing a system of theology, an ethic and a liturgical system from our knowledge of the world and ourselves. But there is a *religious dimension of experience* which belongs to human life as such in the universe. It belongs to life itself to ask the question of God and to experience the need for that ultimate power and purpose which unifies the self and preserves it from the destructiveness of self-indulgence and the chaos of many competing possibilities when they are without the constraint of an ultimate purpose. No

claim in behalf of revelation can be made in disregard of these facts. For in the face of such a claim we cannot avoid asking for the connection between our natural religious concern and the interpretation we are to give to the religious intuitions derived from what we have called special occasions. Since, moreover, man is capable of attaining natural knowledge through general experience in which all participate, the question of the bearing of that knowledge upon religious truth becomes inescapable. Whenever the proponents of natural religion understood their claim in this sense they were right.

The second consequence is that there is no purely historical or revelational religion either. The truths about God and man delivered through special occasions must be received and interpreted by man under the conditions that govern the reception of all experience and the attainment of all knowledge. This means that the language, the thought forms and the secular knowledge possessed by the interpreting mind will enter essentially into the expression and development of the religious truth.

A profound understanding suggests that when we entertain the concept of natural religion, we think not of how much can be attained through reason alone and how much is derived from other sources, but rather of the *religious dimension of experience* and of the relevance of our natural knowledge for the interpretation and validation of the traditional faith in which we stand. A religious tradition which seeks to insulate itself from all connection with man's general experience and knowledge on the supposition that God is not to be measured by the wisdom of this world, not only shows impiety toward the divine creation, but also runs the risk of losing its very life. The history of religion is filled with examples of causes lost because their proponents believed it possible to preserve their ancient wisdom free from all contaminating contact with insights derived from general experience and secular knowledge. A rational religion cannot afford to make that mistake.

THE USE OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY CONTROVERSY: CHRISTOPHER ST. GERMAN AND SIR THOMAS MORE IN 1533

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In the important controversy between Sir Thomas More and Christopher St. German during the year 1533 — a controversy whose importance reaches into theological domains and involves also the vexatious conflict between the common law and the Roman canon law in England[1] — we find a citation of St. John Chrysostom used first by St. German and then accepted and repeated by More. The apparent source is Chrysostom's famous commentary on St. Matthew, and this work (translated by Burgundio of Pisa in the later twelfth century) is, as Miss Smalley reminds us, the book "which St. Thomas Aquinas preferred to the whole town of Paris. . . ."[2] Further involved, of course, is the

[1] The controversy between Christopher St. German and Sir Thomas More was begun in 1532 with St. German's treatise, Dyuers articles whiche haue bene a speciall cause of the diuision that is betwyxte the spiritualtie and the temporaltie in this realme — usually referred to as the Diuision between the spiritualtie and the temporaltie — to which More replied in The Apologye of Syr Thomas More, Knyght, early in 1533. St. German quickly answered with his dialogue-like Salem and Bizance, and More responded with The Debellacion of Salem and Bizance, in the same year.

This controversy will be dealt with more fully in the editions of More's Apology and of his Debellation of Salem and Bizance now in preparation by J. B. Trapp and the present writer for the Yale edition of More.

[2] Beryl Smalley, The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages, 2d ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1952), p. 337. Chrysostom's rôle in the still unwritten story of the influence of Greek patristic writings in the later middle ages and early renaissance was of course very great. It is worth noting that Nicholas of Lyre, whose apparatus indeed outlasted the middle ages — we know that Thomas More, e.g., habitually read from Nicholas — made great use of Chrysostom's commentaries and homilies. See Smalley, ibid., and Père Spicq (who is much more detailed with citations of Chrysostom in the middle ages), Esquisse d'une Histoire de l'exégèse Latine au Moyen Age (Paris, 1944), pp. 11, 17, 228–231, & passim. The Postilla de Lyra is in the list of books which Gerson (whom we shall encounter later) recommended to the Dauphin of France: James L. Connolly, John Gerson (Louvain, 1928), p. 193.

On the translation of Burgundio, see L. Tropia, La Tradizione di Burgunio

larger problem of the influence of St. John Chrysostom before and during the sixteenth century,[3] as well as the technical question of methods of using commentaries on Scripture and thus the weight of *auctoritas* among the early Tudor controversialists. While it is only the modest story of one maxim that I wish to call attention to in this brief paper, I think that we shall in addition learn something of the English fortunes of one of the most widely used medieval compendia of commentaries, the Catena Aurea of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Writing in 1533, after having published his "dialogue" on the division between spiritualty and temporalty anonymously,[4] Christopher St. German declared in his Salem and Bizance:

> And therfore it is that Ihon*n* Chrysostom saith vppon Matthewe the .xxi. Chap. That if preesthode be holle and sounde, all the churche flourysseth: and if it be corrupte, the feyth and vertue of the people fadeth also & vanisheth away.[5]

Pisano delle Omilie di S. Giovanni Crisostomo sopra Matteo, in Aevum, xxvi (1952), 113–130; M.-D. Chenu, La Théologie au douzième Siècle (Paris, 1957), p. 281 — see generally Chenu on "L'Entrée de la Théologie Grecque," pp. 274 ff.

[3] While the sixteenth-century influence of St. John Chrysostom was not of course so great as that of St. Augustine, nonetheless nearly all the reformers and controversialists from Luther on made ample use of Chrysostom, and of his sermons especially. One must observe that the question of text becomes crucial with citations of Chrysostom, for as Hessels first noted as early as 1567, one's reading of Chrysostom on such a question as the sacraments depends upon which text is used; basing his conclusions upon Hessel's Confutatio, Polman points to the Paris editions of 1542 and 1556, and the Basle of 1546, as presenting quite divergent redactions: P. Polman, L'Élément Historique dans la Controverse religieuse du XVIe Siècle (Gembloux, 1932), pp. 342–343, & passim. Attention will be called below to Erasmus' rôle in the edition of 1530, and here it is to be noted that Bishop John Fisher too was involved in the editing of Chrysostom: "Les fameuses liturgies qui portent le nom de saint Jean Chrysostome et de saint Basile et qui dèslors furent considérées comme des témoignages du IVe siècle, furent éditées en grec à Rome, déjà en 1526; deux ans plus tard celle de saint Jean Chrysostome parut en latin à Venise; à la demande du bienheureux Jean Fisher, Érasme en composa une nouvelle traduction latine qui parut à Paris en 1537" (Polman, ibid., p. 431; cf. 434, 456).

[4] The attribution of St. German's books, the diuision between the spiritualtie and the temporaltie, and Salem and Bizance, goes back to the authority of Bale's Catalogus, and it is amply supported by internal evidence of authorship: both of these works and the better-known Doctor and Student are convincingly alike with respect to the kinds of problems raised and discussed, the authorities cited, and the style generally — these have been discussed by Arthur I. Taft in his edition of The Apologye of Syr Thomas More, Knyght (E.E.T.S., O.S.180, 1930), pp. 259–260 — afterwards cited as Taft — and will be further discussed by Trapp in his forthcoming edition.

[5] Salem and Bizance, sig. B.ii^{v}.

Replying within the same year to St. German in his Debellation of Salem and Bizance, Thomas More acknowledged the saying as St. John Chrysostom's:

> And therfore it is that John Chrisostom saith vpon Mathew $\overset{e}{y}$ .xxi. Chapi. That if priesthod be hole & sound, al the churche florysheth: & if it be corrupt, the faith & vertue of the people fadeth also and vanisheth away.

More is obviously writing this passage with St. German's page open before him, for a little further on he repeats:

> For surelie as saint Chrisostom saithe, if the priesthod be corrupt, the faithe and vertue of the people fadeth & vanisheth away, which is without any question very truth. . . .[6]

But despite the vigor of More's agreement with the idea expressed, the passage attributed to St. John Chrysostom appears neither in the well-known Homilia of Chrysostom nor in a likely work, the editions of Nicholas of Lyra which, one might have supposed, More was likely to have been using, inasmuch as there is external evidence that he customarily read to his family from it. This same pseudo-Chrysostom text occurs in the fourteenth-century Piers Plowman, and as long ago as Skeat's nineteenth-century edition of the poem it was pointed out that "the passage here attributed to St. John Chrysostom [a passage in PP reprinted below] is not to be found in his genuine works. It occurs in the 38th of a set of Homilies on the Gospel of St. Matthew, a work of an uncertain author, sometimes called 'Opus Imperfectum' from its incomplete state, and printed in some editions of St. Chrysostom's works as an Appendix to his Homilies on St. Matthew."[7]

We are confronted, then, with four writers who quote a text attributed to St. Chrysostom, and we have the problem of tracing out the lines of indebtedness. We can best present the problem by first setting out in parallel columns the four passages from the Opus Imperfectum, the Catena Aurea, Piers Plowman, and lastly John Gerson.

[6] Debellation, sig. D.i.^{r}.
[7] W. W. Skeat, ed. Piers Plowman (Oxford, 1891), II, 217.

OPUS IMPERFECTUM	CATENA AUREA
Nam sicut de templo omne bonum egreditur, sic & de templo omne malum procedit. Quemadmodum medicus quando primo ingreditur ad infirmum, statim de stomacho eius interrogat, & eum componere primum sestinat: quia si stomachus sanus fuerit, totum corpus ualidum est: si autem dissipatus fuerit, totum corpus infirmum est.	. . . nam sicut de templo omne bonum egreditur, ita de templo omne malum procedit:
Ita si sacerdotium integrum fuerit, tota ecclesia floret: si autem corruptum fuerit, omnium fides marcida est. Cor aute*m* & stomachus sacerdotes intelliguntur, quia in rebus spiritualibus per eos totus populus gubernatur. Et sicut cor sapientiae locus est, ita sacerdotes sunt receptacula sapientiae spiritualis, Esaia dicente: de regibus quidem. Sic sacerdotibus in ecclesia loquentibus, uerbum omnes suscipiunt, unusquisque autem conuertit illud secundum proprium cor, ita ut unu*m* idipsum uerbum in cordibus quidem rectis procedat at uitam: in cordibus autem peruersis suscitet iracundiam, quasibilis:	si enim sacerdotium integrum fuerit, tota Ecclesia floret; si autem corruptum fuerit, tota fides marcida est;
Sic si aliquis Christianorum peccauerit, non omnino peccant & sacerdotes: si aute*m* & sacerdotes fuerint in peccatis, totus populus co*n*uertitur ad peccandum.	
Ideo unusquisque Christianorum pro suo peccato reddet rationem: sacerdotes autem non solum pro suis, sed & pro omnium peccatis reddituri sunt rationem. Videt arborem pollentibus foliis marcidam, & intellexit studiosus agricola, quia laesuram in radicibus haberet.	
Nam uere quemadmodum cum uideris arborem pallentibus foliis, marcida*m* intelligis, quia aliquam culpam habet circa radicem: ita cum uideris populum indisciplinatum et irreligiosum, sine dubio cognoscere, quia sacerdotium eius non est sanum . . .	sicut enim cum videris arborem pallentibus foliis, intelligis quia vitium habet in radice; sic cum videris populum indisciplinatum, sine dubio cognosce quia sacerdotium ejus non est sanum.
(text from Tertius Tomus Operum Divi Ioannis Chrysostomi . . . (Basel, 1530), pp. 663–664 (Homilia xxxviii. Ex cap. xxi.)	(text from Sancti Thomae Aquinatis . . . Opera Omnia, ed. Vernon J. Bourke [New York, 1949], XI, 240.)

PIERS PLOWMAN	JOHN GERSON
Iohannes Crysostomus. of clerkes speketh and prestes,	
Sicut de templo omne bonum progreditur, sic de templo omne malum procedit,	Sicut . . . de Templo omne bonum egreditur, ita et de Templo omne malum procedit.
Si sacerdocium integrum fuerit, tota floret ecclesia: si autem corruptum fuerit, omnium fides marcida est.	Si enim Sacerdotium integrum fuerit, tota Ecclesia floret; si autem corruptum fuerit, omnium Fides et virtus marcida est;
Si sacerdocium fuerit in peccatis, totus populus conuertitur ad peccandum.	
	sicut cum videris arborem pallentibus foliis, intelligis quia vitium habet in radice, sic cum videris populum indisciplinatum, sine dubio cognosce, quia sacerdotium ejus non est sanum.
(text from Skeat edition, B XV, 115 ff.; C XVII, 271 ff.)	(text from reprint of Declaratio by Taft in Apologye of Syr Thomas More, Knyght, E.E.T.S., O.S. 180 [1930], p. 290.)

Overlooking the extraordinary development of the organic metaphor in the Opus Imperfectum, it must first be observed that St. Thomas Aquinas did not quote all of the Opus Imperfectum; he omitted much. What follow, then, are these conclusions:

(1) Piers Plowman quotes the Opus Imperfectum, perhaps at a distance: it includes the phrase *si autem et sacerdotes fuerint in peccatis, totus populus conuertitur ad peccandum*, which St. Thomas omitted; and there is nothing here to show that the Plowman poet consulted the Catena Aurea. From this we can agree with Skeat, though with less force than perhaps he intended, that "it is obvious that William's [the poet's] quotation was made from memory."[8]

(2) Gerson is following the Catena Aurea *ad litteram*: there can be no question that his source is St. Thomas.

(3) Neither Gerson nor St. German (nor, consequently, More) is following Piers Plowman.

What of the source for St. German's use of this maxim? Because he begins with *Si sacerdocium* ("That if preesthode be holle and sound . . .") and ends with *omnium fides marcida est* ("the feyth and vertue of the people fadeth also & vanisheth away"), we cannot be certain from the evidence of this citation alone. But there is ample supporting evidence that St. German has gathered much out of Gerson's Declaratio Compendiosa Defectuum Virorum Ecclesiasticorum: indeed, the editor of More's Apology for the Early English Text Society has shown how closely a passage in the second chapter of St. German's book (the diuision that is betwixte the spiritualtie and the temporaltie . . . [1532]) corresponds with a sequence of points in Gerson.[9] And, to have complete certitude, in St. German's second chapter we have a full Englishing of the original passage:

> And saynt Iohan Chrisostome vpon Mathewe the .xxi. chapiter sayth, that as of the temple cometh out all goodnes, so of the temple all euyl procedeth. And therfore hit foloweth that if preesthode be hoole, all the church florissheth: And if it be corrupte, the fayth and vertue of the people fadeth also and falleth away: as if thou see a tree that hath wethered leues, thou knowest therby that there is a defaute in the

[8] Ibid. Skeat was checking the poet's memory against the Opus Imperfectum.

[9] For Gerson, Opera Omnia, II, 314 ff. (q. Taft, pp. 290–291). For St. German, Taft, pp. 210–213.

roote, so whan thou seest the people lyue out of good ordre, knowe it for certayne, that theyr presthode is not hole ne sounde.[10]

The line of influence, we must conclude, runs unmistakably from the Opus Imperfectum through the Catena Aurea to John Gerson, and from Gerson's Declaratio to St. German. More, alas, did not check St. German's attribution — unless, like St. German, he also accepted it on the strength of Gerson, whose works he too knew firsthand.[11]

We can end this excursus on one further point. In the 1530 Basle edition of the Opera Omnia of St. John Chrysostom, and again in the 1570 edition, the spurious Homily is reprinted separately. It is ironic that Erasmus had a large hand in the editing of the 1530 edition and was scrupulous to warn the reader:

> primum nulla dubitatio est, hoc opus
> non esse Chrysostomi, quod quoniam hactenus
> illius titulo frequenter excusum est . . .[12]

But we know that More did not keep abreast of the latest scholarship in every field in which he was engaged in those extraordinarily busy years of the late 1520's and 1530's, and after about 1520 there was a growing distance between him and Erasmus. We must infer that he never saw a copy of this edition, or, if he did, that he did not read every page of it.[13]

[10] Taft, p. 211.

[11] More's use of the Catena Aurea calls for some comment. Only once, apparently, does he mention it, and then only rather incidentally: in the Confutation (Works, 666D), "And holy saynt Thomas alledgeth in hys boke called Cathena aurea. . . ." Sister M. Thecla has convincingly argued that in his Treatise vpon the passion More made extensive use of the Catena, but her further statement that "his long polemical and devotional treatises manifestly draw upon the full originals of classical and patristic authority" requires much qualification and modification — see her "S. Thomas More and the Catena Aurea," Modern Language Notes, lxi (1946), 523–529.

[12] Chrysostom (Basle ed., 1530), III, 473.

[13] But we must add the following statement by More (which I have just come upon elsewhere in the 1557 folio): ". . . For it is wel perceiued and knowen that the worke which is called Opus imperfectum, the imperfait worke upon the ghospel of saynt Mathew, which was fyrst by y^e^ errour and ouersight of some writers intiteled unto saint Chrisostome, and y^e^ same title so suffred since to stand, was neuer hys worke in dede, nor neuer translated out of y^e^ greke, but made by some latten man, as frere Barns hath already had sufficient warning bi mo than one, that can a little better skill therof then I and he both, and I verely belieue that agaynst his own conscience he ascribeth that woorke to saynt Chrisostome . . ." So More wrote in 1532 in the Confutacion of Tyndale's Aunswere (Works, 1557, sig. D. iiij^r^ & ^v^).

THE "SUFFERING SERVANT" AND MILTON'S HEROIC NORM

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IN the Christ of Paradise Regain'd recent scholarship has recognized Milton's answer to the classic problem of the Renaissance epic poet — the choice of an exemplary hero. In both of his epics the perfect "pattern of a Christian hero"[1] is exhibited not in a secular "king or knight," but in the Son of God himself — the "Most perfect *Heroe*, try'd in heaviest plight Of labours huge and hard, too hard for human wight." In the protagonist of Paradise Regain'd Hughes saw "the culmination of the faith of the Reformers in an exemplar [*sic*] Redeemer, the Word of Saint John's Gospel, as it fused with the cravings of the critics and poets of the later Renaissance for a purely exemplary hero in epic poetry."[2] Kermode found in this figure an ideal of Christian heroism surpassing that of the pagan worthies both in virtue and in rewards:

> We learn . . . why Christ is the exemplary hero by watching him in the act of confuting or transcending all the known modes of heroism. We are taught the rewards of Christian heroism by a demonstration based on the superseded rewards of the old heroes.[3]

[1] Merritt Y. Hughes, "The Christ of *Paradise Regained* and the Renaissance Heroic Tradition," SP, XXXV (1938), 254–277; idem, "Milton and the Sense of Glory," PQ, XXVIII (1949), 107–124; E. M. W. Tillyard, "The Christ of *Paradise Regained* and the Renaissance Heroic Tradition," SP, XXXVI (1939), 247–252; Milton Miller, "*Paradise Lost*: The Double Standard," University of Toronto Quarterly, XX (1951), 183–199; Frank Kermode, "Milton's Hero," RES, ns, IV (1953), 317–330; A. S. P. Woodhouse, "Theme and Pattern in *Paradise Regained*," University of Toronto Quarterly, XXV (1956), 167–182. See also Arnold Stein, Heroic Knowledge: An Interpretation of Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes (Minneapolis, 1957); Stein's "underlying assumption" (p. 17) is "that *Paradise Regained* is a dramatic definition of 'heroic knowledge,' not of heroic rejection; and that the contest is a preparation for *acting transcendence in the world*, by uniting intuitive knowledge with proved intellectual and moral discipline"; cf. ibid., 205, "The key for Milton is knowledge, the self-knowledge of thought tested by deed, heroic knowledge maintained against the pressing claims of immediate knowledge and action."

[2] Hughes, SP, 277.

[3] Kermode, 330.

Finally, Woodhouse has focused attention on "two ideas . . . embodied in the Christ of *Paradise Regained*" — "the idea of obedience to God as the beginning and end of virtue, and the idea of Christian heroism as something new and distinctive, different not simply in degree, but in kind, from every other."[4]

Nevertheless, the attempt to interpret Milton's Christ against the background of Renaissance heroic tradition involves us in a certain paradox. While acknowledging that Christ himself provides the heroic norm *par excellence*, we may find ourselves, notwithstanding, in the position of regarding him as the embodiment of ethical concepts which are, in the final analysis, extrinsic to the Biblical Messiah — of explaining his character as a reflection of Milton's personal preference for a particular heroic ideal (magnanimity or charity, action or contemplation, doing or suffering, the military fortitude displayed in "Warrs" or "the better fortitude Of Patience and Heroic Martyrdom").

In actuality (Milton would have insisted) the true heroic paradigm is implicit in Christ, and any valid conception of the heroic norm must inevitably be derivative from his example. He is, strictly speaking, the *archetype* rather than the *embodiment* of Christian heroism. As the perfect "pattern of a Christian hero" is, *ipso facto*, Christ himself, Milton modelled his exemplary hero not on any ideal extrinsic to the Biblical Messiah, but on the character of the historic Christ as revealed in the Scriptures and interpreted by Protestant theologians. He did not "lay" the heroic norm in this figure, as he might have done in the case of some "king or knight, before the conquest."[5] Instead, it was precisely from the Son of God that he derived his heroic paradigm.

The norm of heroic excellence in both epics is Biblical both in origin and in authority. In the lineaments of his poetic Christ Milton sought to imitate those of the historic Messiah — the "suffering servant" of Isaiah's prophecy, the redeemer in "the form of a servant" of Philippians. In both of these poems the supremely heroic enterprise is Messiah's ministry of redemption, and in the twofold aspects of this ministry — Messiah's humiliation and exaltation — lies the perfect exemplar of Christian heroism and

[4] Woodhouse, 167.

[5] See The Reason of Church Government, in The Prose Works of John Milton, II (Bohn Library, London, 1883), 478.

its rewards. This is the true prototype of the heroic pattern in both Paradise Lost and Paradise Regain'd, and for the characterization of Christ in either poem the concepts of Renaissance ethical theory are of secondary importance.

Milton's search for the ideal exemplar of Christian heroism led him, then, from the inferior imitation to the archetype, from the Christian "king or knight" to Christ himself. In choosing the Messiah as his "pattern of a Christian hero," he pursued to its logical conclusion an axiom of Renaissance poetic theory — that the poet must imitate the idea. Poetry is more philosophic than history, Aristotle had insisted, "since its statements are of the nature rather of universals, whereas those of history are singulars."[6] In such epic heroes as Achilles, Odysseus, Aeneas, and Godfrey, Renaissance critics had recognized the "idea" of a valiant warrior, a prudent commander, a virtuous leader, or a Christian prince. Similarly, in looking for some "king or knight, before the conquest," in whom he might "lay the pattern of a Christian hero," Milton had been seeking an appropriate vehicle for the *idea* of Christian virtue — a particular historical example, in which he might delineate the universal norm. In the case of all of these secular worthies the heroic paradigm is an ideal really extrinsic to the men themselves, a universal which the poet may *embody* in a particular individual. In the instance of Milton's Christ, however, the relationship of the historical particular to the universal norm is radically different. Here the example is himself the Idea; the historical individual is himself the universal norm. In Christ, the suffering servant, Milton found the very archetype of Christian heroism.

I

Not only is Christ himself the heroic exemplar in both of Milton's epics, but his ministry of redemption is likewise the supremely heroic or "godlike" enterprise. At best, the secular worthy could bring a superficial and temporary deliverance to a mere fraction of humanity. Christ's satisfaction, on the other hand, enabled him to offer a genuine and eternal deliverance to all man-

[6] Ingram Bywater (tr.), Aristotle on the Art of Poetry (Oxford, 1951), 43.

kind — "to save . . . the whole Race lost," "to save A World from utter loss." Moreover, the secular hero achieved fame largely through acts of destruction. Messiah, on the other hand, not only surpassed them in destructive might (witness his victory over the rebel angels), but was capable of a still loftier mode of valor — both to create and to restore his fallen creation; "to create," the angelic choir reminds us, "is greater than created to destroy." Finally, the earthly conqueror had inevitably been overcome by Sin and Death. Messiah, on the other hand, overcame both of these "grand foes" in his ministry of redemption. The ministry of redemption is thus the supremely heroic act of the "Most perfect *Heroe*," and it is to the dual aspects of this ministry — Christ's humiliation and exaltation[7] — that we must look for the archetypal pattern of Christian heroic virtue and its reward.

Christ's humiliation and exaltation (Milton declared in the De Doctrina Christiana) provide a normative pattern for all Christian believers. The conformity[8] of the faithful to his image was a major objective of his ministry of redemption:

> The second object of the ministry of the Mediator is, *that we may be conformed to the image of Christ, as well in his state of humiliation as of exaltation.*[9]

[7] See Milton's Christian Doctrine, tr. Charles R. Sumner, in Prose Works, IV, 304, "Having treated of the mediatorial office, and its threefold functions, we are now to consider the manner in which it is discharged. This includes the state of humiliation to which our Redeemer submitted, as well as his state of exaltation." For the relationship of the theology of the De Doctrina to that of Paradise Lost, see Maurice Kelley, This Great Argument (Princeton, 1941).

[8] In representing Christ himself as the heroic exemplar in both of his epics, Milton was following not only the theological doctrine of "the conformation of the faithful to the image of Christ" (Prose Works, IV, 309), but also the Renaissance critical principle of conformity to the moral example of the epic hero. Thus Tasso maintains, in his Discorsi del Poema Eroico, that heroic poems and discourses on their composition should be especially dear to those who, "riconoscendo le virtú del padre e de gli avi, se non piú belle, almeno piú ornate con varii e diversi lumi de la poesia, cercano di conformar l'animo loro a quello esempio; e l'intelletto loro medesimo è il pittore che va dipingendo ne l'anima a quella similitudine le forme de la fortezza, de la temperanza, de la prudenza, de la giustizia, de la fede, e de la pietá, e de la religione, e d'ogni altra virtu, la quale o sia acquistata per lunga esercitazione, o infusa per grazia divina." Torquato Tasso, Prose, ed. Francesco Flora (Milan and Rome, 1935), 319.

[9] Milton, IV, 316. Cf. Amandus Polanus, The Substance of Christian Religion, tr. Thomas Wilcocks (London, 1608), 121, "The state of the humiliation of Christ, was that state of his in which hee did abase himselfe, that so by his obedience, hee might satisfie for our disobedience." According to John Wolleb's Abridgment of Christian Divinitie, tr. Alexander Ross (London, 1660), 135, "The state of Humilia-

Like Christ, the faithful must endure suffering, but, with Christ, they would receive an eternal "reward" or "recompense"[10] of heavenly glory:

> Rom. viii. 29, "to be conformed to the image of his Son . . ."; [Rom.] viii, 17, "if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together . . ."; 2 Tim. ii, 11, 12, "if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him . . ."; 1 Pet. iv. 13, "rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also."
> John xii. 32, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."; [John] xvi. 22, "the glory that thou gavest me, I have given them."; Ephesians ii. 5, 6, "God hath quickened us together with Christ . . . and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."[11]

Again, in a passage Milton cites frequently in his chapter "Of the Ministry of Redemption,"[12] St. Paul exhorts the Philippians (2: 5–9) to imitate the example of Christ's humiliation:

> Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.

In Christ's humiliation and exaltation — an example normative for all believers — Milton found his ideal "pattern" of Christian heroism and its reward.

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tion is, in which he took the forme of a Servant being in the forme of God, and gave obedience to his Father for us . . .: And in this State he so performed his Prophetical, Sacerdotal, and Regal office, that in a manner he stript himselfe of the forme and glory of the Divinity." In The Reason of Church Government, Milton declared (II, 483) that "the form of a servant was a mean, laborious, and vulgar life, aptest to teach; which form Christ thought fittest, that he might bring about his will according to his own principles, choosing the meaner things of this world, that he might put under the high."

[10] Milton, IV, 317, "So far, therefore, as regards the satisfaction of Christ, and our conformity to his humiliation, the restoration of man is of merit; in which sense those texts are to be understood which convey a notion of recompense and reward."

[11] Ibid., 316–317.

[12] Ibid., 304–308, 316; cf. 118, 145.

II

In Messiah's humiliation Milton found an ethical pattern diametrically opposed to that of the secular hero. Where the worldly hero sought glory, Christ had voluntarily renounced glory for shame. Where the worldly hero strove to win "high repute," Christ had made himself of "no reputation." Where the worldly hero aspired to regal dignity, Christ had assumed the form of a servant. Where the worldly hero had usurped divine titles ("and must be titl'd Gods, Great Benefactors of mankind, Deliverers, Worship't with Temple, Priest and Sacrifice; One is the Son of *Jove*, of *Mars* the other"), Christ had resigned the "form of God" and the privileges of divinity. In this concept of heroic humility —a heroism characterized by obedience, lowliness, and suffering— Milton found the antithesis of the world's opinion of the hero.

Let us briefly examine the use Milton makes of this conception of the "suffering servant" as heroic archetype, first in Paradise Lost and afterwards in Paradise Regain'd.

Christ's humiliation (Milton declared in the De Doctrina) is "that state in which under his character of God-man he voluntarily submitted himself to the divine justice, as well in life as in death, for the purpose of undergoing all things requisite to accomplish our redemption."[13] The first object of his ministry of redemption was "the satisfaction of divine justice on behalf of all men"; and in accomplishing this satisfaction he "fulfilled the law by perfect love to God and his neighbor, until the time when he laid down his life for his brethren, being made obedient unto his Father in all things."[14]

In Paradise Lost these concepts emerge with exceptional clarity in the celestial council of Book III. Here the Son of God "voluntarily submits himself to the divine justice" on man's behalf. The particular virtues he manifests on this occasion — "immortal love To mortal men" and "Filial obedience" — are the moral qualities especially demanded for his satisfaction. In accepting the Father's challenge to "satisfie for Man," he displays that "magnanimous

[13] Ibid., 304.
[14] Ibid., 309–310.

resolution to die,"[15] which, in Tasso's opinion, characterized the ideal epic hero. In this scene he voluntarily makes "himself of no reputation" and becomes "obedient unto death."

> Account mee man; I for his sake will leave
> Thy bosom, and this glorie next to thee
> Freely put off, and for him lastly die
> Well pleas'd, on me let Death wreck all his rage. . . .

In this passage, crucial for the celestial strategy in the Holy War, the heroic norm is clearly based on the doctrine of Christ's humiliation. After first presenting the Messiah in "the form of God" and as "equal to God," Milton shows him volunteering to "take upon him the form of a servant," for the sake of accomplishing his ministry of redemption. This deliberate renunciation of glory for shame ("no reputation") stands in striking opposition to Satan's motivation in the analogous scene in Hell ("the high repute Which he through hazard huge must earn").

Again, Milton stresses Messiah's humiliation in Book X, when the Son of God assumes "the forme of servant" immediately after passing judgment on Adam and Eve:

> . . . [He] disdain'd not to begin
> Thenceforth the forme of servant to assume,
> As when he wash'd his servants' feet, so now
> As Father of his Familie he clad
> Thir nakedness with Skins of Beasts, or slain . . .:
> Nor hee thir outward onely with the Skins
> Of Beasts, but inward nakedness, much more
> Opprobrious, with his Robe of righteousness,
> Araying cover'd from his Fathers sight.

Later, in his mediatorial function, he intercedes with the Father (X, 228; XI, 21–44) on behalf of the guilty pair. Finally, in Book XII, Michael recapitulates the essential details of Christ's humiliation and satisfaction (XII, 390–435):

> The Law of God exact he shall fulfil
> Both by obedience and by love, though love
> Alone fulfil the Law; thy punishment

[15] Tasso, 368, "ma l'illustre de l'eroico è fondato . . . sopra il magnanimo proponimento di morire. . . ."

> He shall endure by coming in the Flesh
> To a reproachful life and cursed death. . . .

In this passage, as in Book III, the poet emphasizes the two allied virtues, obedience and love — both requisite for Christ's mission "to satisfie for Man." It is from Michael's account of Christ's humiliation that Adam learns the better fortitude of "suffering for Truth's sake" and the merit of obedience.

If Messiah's humiliation constitutes the norm of Christian heroism in Paradise Lost, his exaltation provides the pattern of the Christian's reward — a *remuneratio aeterna* of celestial glory:

> *The exaltation of Christ* is that by which *having triumphed over death, and laid aside the form of a servant, he was exalted by God the Father to a state of immortality and of the highest glory, partly by his own merits, partly by the gift of the Father, for the benefit of mankind; wherefore he rose again from the dead, ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God.* . . . This exaltation consists of three degrees; his resurrection, his ascension into heaven, and his sitting on the right hand of God. . . .[16]

In Book III the Son himself prophesies his triumph over death and his victorious return to Heaven "with the multitude of my redeem'd" (III, 247–265). That his exaltation is the reward for his humiliation is stated, however, even more explicitly by the Father (III, 305–317):

> Because thou hast, though Thron'd in highest bliss
> Equal to God, and equally enjoying
> God-like fruition, quitted all to save
> A World from utter loss, and hast been found
> By Merit more than Birthright Son of God,
> Found worthiest to be so by being Good,
> Far more than Great of High; because in thee
> Love hath abounded more than Glory abounds,
> Therefore thy Humiliation shall exalt
> With thee thy Manhood also to this Throne;
> Here shalt thou sit incarnate, here shalt Reigne
> Both God and Man, Son both of God and Man,
> Anointed universal King. . . .

[16] Milton, IV, 307–308.

Again, in Book III, Michael foretells Messiah's exaltation and entrance into glory and foresees the heavenly reward of the faithful (XII, 456–465).

III

In Paradise Regain'd, as in the earlier epic, the heroic norm is to be found in Christ's ministry of redemption — in the humiliation which precedes his ultimate exaltation. Although (as Miss Pope[17] has pointed out) the temptation is itself an aspect of this humiliation, the poet's primary emphasis falls on future events. The temptation is basically an "apprentissage" — a schooling in spiritual combat preliminary to a greater battle. In this preparatory "exercise" the protagonist must "first lay down the rudiments Of his great warfare" against Sin and Death. As he is to conquer these "grand foes" not by physical weapons, but by "Humiliation and strong Sufferance," he must learn the particular virtues requisite for his future satisfaction — obedience, humility, reliance on Providence (I, 290–293), and patience. These are the necessary moral equipment for his "reproachful life" and the supreme agony of the crucifixion — a death "ignominious in the highest degree." In this epic, as in its predecessor, the virtues Milton stresses as normative for Christian heroism are those particularly characteristic of the "suffering servant" — obedience and the "better fortitude" of patience. Both of these virtues are actually based on the concept of Messiah's humiliation, and it is significant that Milton's Christ recognizes that suffering and obedience, exercised in "humble state," are necessary prerequisites for his ultimate exaltation (III, 188–197):

> What if he hath decreed that I shall first
> Be try'd in humble state, and things adverse,
> By tribulations, injuries, insults,
> Contempts, and scorns, and snares, and violence,
> Suffering, abstaining, quietly expecting
> Without distrust or doubt, that he may know
> What I can suffer, how obey? who best
> Can suffer, best can do; best reign, who first

[17] Elizabeth Marie Pope, Paradise Regained: The Tradition and the Poem (Baltimore, 1947), 13–14.

> Well hath obey'd; just tryal e're I merit
> My exaltation without change or end.

In the spiritual duel between Christ's wisdom and Satan's "hellish wiles," Milton skillfully exploited the antithesis between the "form of God" which Messiah had laid aside and the "form of a servant" which he had assumed, for some highly effective irony. Throughout the poem Satan has assayed to discover the identity of "this glorious Eremite"—

> In what degree of meaning thou art call'd
> The Son of God, which bears no single sense;

yet it is not until the third and final temptation that he realizes that the "Son of *Joseph* deem'd" is identical with Jehovah's "first-begot," whose "fierce thunder drove us to the deep." And this he learns by a miracle; only when Messiah is able "to stand upright" on the "highest Pinnacle" does his adversary recognize him.

Satan's inability to recognize the Son of God in the state of humiliation is quite consistent with the belief (shared by several Reformation theologians) that Christ's divinity was "hidden" in the state of his humiliation, but nevertheless manifested itself on occasion in miracles. Polanus maintained that "Christ humbled himselfe in respect of his Deity . . . by hiding it under the forme of a servant which he had assumed. . . ."[18] Wolleb asserted that when Christ "stript himself of the forme and glory of the Divinity," he "did not cast off the Divinity, but hid it in the assumed form of a servant: And . . . the Deity of Christ did manifest it selfe in the state of his Humiliation, chiefly by miracles. . . ."[19] Milton exploits this conception poetically for the sake of complicating his Fable. It enables him to achieve "the finest form of Discovery" — "one attended by Peripeties, like that which goes with the Discovery in *Oedipus*."[20]

[18] Polanus, 150. Cf. Paradise Regain'd, III, lines 21–23, "These God-like Vertues wherefore dost thou hide? Affecting private life, or more obscure In savage Wilderness . . . ?"

[19] Wolleb, 135–136. For Milton's indebtedness to Wolleb, see Maurice Kelley, "Milton's Debt to Wolleb's *Compendium Theologiae Christianae*," PMLA, L (1935), 156–165; T. S. K. Scott-Craig, "Milton's Use of Wolleb and Ames," MLN, LV (1940), 403–407.

[20] Bywater, 47. Cf. Hughes (ed.), Paradise Regained (New York, 1937), 531 n.; Ida Langdon, Milton's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art (New Haven, 1924).

It is the essential identity of the Son — the continuity of his divine Sonship in the state of humiliation as in that of exaltation — that the "Angelic Quires" emphasize in their final hymn:

> True Image of the Father, whether thron'd
> In the bosom of bliss, and light of light
> Conceiving, or remote from Heaven, enshrin'd
> In fleshly Tabernacle, and human form,
> Wandr'ing the Wilderness, whatever place,
> Habit, or state, or motion, still expressing
> The Son of God, with Godlike force indu'd
> Against th' Attempter of thy Father's Throne. . . .

Whether in the "form of God" or in the "form of a servant," Messiah remains the "first-begot" of the Father, and it is to "His Father's business" — the ministry of redemption — that the final lines of the angelic chorus commit him:

> . . . on thy glorious work
> Now enter, and begin to save mankind.

Humiliation and suffering — these are, paradoxically, the "matchless Deeds" whereby he must "express [his] matchless Sire."

Negatively, the pattern of Christ's humiliation determines in part the character of the "manlier objects . . . such as have more show Of Worth, of honour, glory, and popular praise," whereby his antagonist attempts to try his constancy. Wealth, honor, arms, arts, kingdoms, empires, glory, fame (IV, 368–369, 536) — these are not merely inferior [21] to the *remuneratio aeterna* the Messiah merits for mankind; they are also fundamentally at variance with the nature of his mediatorial office, with the theological purpose of his humiliation. In order to carry out "His Father's business" — the ministry of redemption — Messiah must reject all ends or means incompatible with the character of the "suffering servant." The enterprises and rewards which Satan proposes are, indeed, characteristic of secular opinions of heroic activity, but, inasmuch as they are diametrically opposed to the Messianic pattern of humiliation, they are obstacles, rather than means, to his destined enterprise — the redemption of mankind.

If, on the one hand, Satan attempts to divert Messiah from his

[21] See Kermode, op. cit.

mission of redemption by tempting him to choose ends and means inconsistent with his humiliation, on the other hand he depicts the Messianic norm of humiliation as an evil to be eschewed. He pretends to find in the stars a prediction of ignominy and death, and he interprets this pattern of adversity as an obstacle to the execution of the Biblical prophecies concerning the Messiah, rather than as a means to their fulfillment (IV, 382–388, 477–480):

> Now contrary, if I read aught in Heaven, . . .
> Sorrows and labours, opposition, hate,
> Attends thee, scorns, reproaches, injuries,
> Violence and stripes, and lastly cruel death.
>
> If thou observe not this, be sure to find,
> What I foretold thee, many a hard assay
> Of dangers, and adversities and pains,
> Ere thou of *Israel's* Scepter get fast hold. . . .

As Satan elsewhere shows familiarity with the prophecies[22] about the future Messiah (III, 178; IV, 381, 502), it seems apparent that he has in mind the Scriptural predictions concerning the suffering servant and is deliberately wresting them to his own purposes. Certainly, Christ himself recognizes in these prophecies the pattern of humiliation and suffering (I, 259–267), and his mother is likewise aware that the future contains not "Honour," but "trouble" (II, 86–87).

> This having heard, strait I again revolv'd
> The Law and Prophets, searching what was writ
> Concerning the Messiah, to our Scribes
> Known partly, and soon found of whom they spake
> I am; this chiefly, that my way must lie
> Through many a hard assay even to the death,
> E're I the promis'd Kingdom can attain,
> Or work Redemption for mankind, whose sins
> Full weight must be transferr'd upon my head.

The phrase "many a hard assay" appears first on Christ's lips

[22] Nevertheless despite his knowledge of these prophecies Satan does not really understand the means whereby Christ will establish his kingdom; cf. Paradise Regain'd, IV, lines 152–153, "Means there shall be to this, but what the means, Is not for thee to know, nor me to tell."

and afterwards on Satan's.[23] By this verbal echo Milton attempts to underscore the contrasting attitudes of the two figures towards the Biblical prophecy of the suffering servant. Whereas Christ, recognizing that his humiliation must precede his exaltation, rejects all alternatives to his destined ministry of redemption, Satan attempts to seduce the hero from the Messianic path of humiliation by proposing contrary ends or means on the one hand and by presenting the idea of the suffering servant as a degradation to be shunned, on the other. Christ, in his "wisdom," interprets the Old Testament prophecy of a suffering Messiah in its correct sense. Satan, by his "hellish wiles," deliberately distorts it.

In this context, the emphasis which Reformation discussions of Messiah's humiliation and exaltation placed on proof texts concerning the Old Testament prophecies of the suffering servant seems especially significant. Polanus[24] cited Luke 24:26, with its specific application of these predictions of Jesus:

> O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures concerning himself.

Similarly, Wolleb, explaining that in the state of humiliation Christ administered his regal office "in gathering together a Church by his word and Spirit, so, that in it their [*sic*] appeared no sign of Regal Majesty," adduced the following corollary: "In vain do the Jews dream of *Messiah's* corporal and earthly Kingdome."[25] In support of this "Rule" he cited three Old Testament prophecies concerning the suffering servant — Isaiah 42:2 and 53:2–3 and Zechariah 9:9,

> He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.

[23] Instead of achieving his kingdom "in short time with ease" (Paradise Regain'd, IV, line 378), as Satan proposes, Christ must attain it only by "many a hard assay" and in the "fulness of time." Satan not only attempts to persuade Jesus to employ means contrary to those set forth in the Messianic prophecies, but also tries to induce him to act prematurely. Christ manifests his obedience through his willingness to await the "due time" which "The Father in his purpose hath decreed" (Paradise Regain'd, III, lines 182–186), whereas Satan argues that the present moment is "full age, fulness of time, thy season" (Paradise Regain'd, IV, line 380).

[24] Polanus, 120–121.

[25] Wolleb, 156.

. . . he hath no form nor comeliness: . . . He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: . . . he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

. . . behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass. . . .

In these prophecies of his humiliation Christ could recognize an ideal absolutely contradictory to the ends and means Satan proposed to him.[26] From the same prophecies[27] his tempter could acquire some knowledge of the nature of the ministry of redemption and evolve a strategy designed to frustrate the Messianic way of humiliation.

IV

In Messiah's ministry of redemption Milton found the norm of Christian heroism for both of his epics, but not (paradoxically) an epic subject. Except for the incomplete lines on "The Passion," he never, apparently, devoted a poem to what would seem to be the logical material for a Christian heroic poet — the crucifixion and resurrection.[28] Though both of his epics represent these "godlike acts" as the supremely heroic enterprise, the actual arguments of both poems concern events preliminary to this "glorious work." In Paradise Regain'd the heroic norm is the "great warfare" on the cross, whereby Messiah is to defeat Sin and Death; but instead of taking the victory over Death and Sin as his subject, Milton chooses the theme of the temptation in the wilderness, where Christ is acquiring the "rudiments" of his subsequent warfare. In Para-

[26] Satan's offer of "the kingdoms of the world, and the *glory* of them" obviously constitutes a direct challenge to the whole concept of Christ's humiliation. Cf. Paradise Lost, III, lines 238–240 ("I for his sake will leave Thy bosom, and *this glorie next to thee* Freely put off, and for him lastly die") and 311–314 ("because in thee Love hath abounded *more then Glory abounds*, Therefore thy Humiliation shall exalt With thee thy Manhood also to this Throne"). Italics mine.

[27] Satan attempts to wrest the prophecies to his own ends, either by representing the values he offers as means of fulfilling the Old Testament predictions concerning the Messiah, or else by maintaining that the prophecies themselves are not absolute but conditional — that their fulfillment is contingent upon Jesus' adopting the means and occasions he offers. Cf. Paradise Regain'd, III, lines 177–180, 351–356; IV, 106–108.

[28] The Trinity Manuscript does, however, contain a brief outline of a drama on "Christus Patiens." See James Holly Hanford, A Milton Handbook, Fourth Edition (New York, 1947), 181 n.

dise Lost the poet declares that Messiah is to triumph through his death and resurrection — by paying "the rigid satisfaction, death for death," and afterwards rising "Victorious" to "subdue" the "vanquisher"; the real argument of this poem, however, is not Christ's triumph, but Adam's fall. Milton never assayed the *Christiad* which would have been the logical epic for a Christian heroic poet to attempt.

Milton may have been deterred from an epic on the passion and resurrection by a variety of considerations. First, the detailed account in the Gospels would have left him little scope to invent or to rearrange his materials. In the case of the subjects he *did* choose — the fall of man and the temptation of Christ — the Biblical narrative afforded the poet ample opportunity for "feigning." Secondly, Milton was quite aware that Vida (*"Cremona's* Trump") had already given epic treatment to the crucifixion in his Christiad.

Nevertheless, in both of his epics the supreme exemplar of heroic virtue and its reward — the perfect pattern of that "suffering for Truths sake" which is "fortitude to highest victorie" and receives a recompense of celestial glory — is ultimately based on Christ's humiliation and exaltation. Though manifested *par excellence* in Messiah himself, this heroic norm of the "suffering servant" [29] who endures "Universal reproach" or violence in his single-handed obedience to the divine will and his isolated witness to the divine truth is also exhibited on the angelic and purely human levels in such "heroes of faith" as Abdiel, the faithful "Servant of God," who maintains "against revolted multitudes the Cause of Truth," in the occasional "Just Man" of Old Testament history (Enoch, Noah, Abraham, etc.), and finally in the persecuted minority of Christians who bear witness to the Gospel in its purity and "in the worship persevere of Spirit and Truth."

[29] For a bibliography of studies on the "suffering servant" of Isaiah 53, see Christopher R. North, The Suffering Servant in Isaiah: An Historical and Critical Study, Second Edition (London, 1956), 240–253. "Until the close of the eighteenth century," North observes (p. 1), "Christian writers — with almost the sole exception of Grotius, who thought of Jeremiah — were unanimous that Isa. liii was Messianic prophecy"; cf. ibid., 23–27.

FRANCIS GREENWOOD PEABODY: HARVARD'S THEOLOGIAN OF THE SOCIAL GOSPEL

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Francis Greenwood Peabody, lecturer in ethics and professor of theology at Harvard University from 1880 to 1912, introduced the teaching of social ethics at Harvard and ranks as one of the foremost interpreters of German theological thought in America. As academic teacher he brought about the abolition of compulsory worship at Harvard College, helped transform the Harvard Divinity School from a denominational seminary into a non-denominational professional school of theology, and introduced studies in contemporary social problems at the Divinity School and at Harvard College. His pioneering work on social problems secured for him a leading rôle in the Social Gospel movement of his time.

A Unitarian by birth, Peabody sought to overcome denominational barriers and was an untiring spokesman for a Protestant ecumenical movement. Despite his life-long residence in Cambridge, he became a bridge-builder between two worlds. Through him German thought strengthened its foothold in the Harvard Divinity School and in American theology, and the social concerns of American Protestantism made their entry into the religious life of Germany. Peabody's Harvard sermons and many of his scholarly writings were translated into German, and German theologians and scholars honored him by offering him the first exchange professorship between an American university and the University of Berlin.

During various periods of his life he served as parish minister in Cambridge, Massachusetts, as an overseer of Harvard College, as a trustee of Hampton Institute in Virginia, as co-founder and president of the Cambridge Prospect Union, and as Dean of the Harvard Divinity School. During World War I, after his retirement from academic service, he was Counsel for the New England Fuel Administrator and General Counsel to the Massachusetts Public Safety Committee as well as to the chief of the Enforce-

ment Division of the Federal Food Administrator for Massachusetts. He died in Cambridge on December 28, 1936, a few days after the celebration of his eighty-ninth birthday.[1]

I

Born in Boston on December 4, 1847, the son of the minister of King's Chapel, Peabody grew up in the center of American Unitarianism. Though his father died when Francis was only seven, the Christian faith of this Unitarian divine impressed itself indelibly on the young boy. In near-by Cambridge Francis frequently visited the houses of Harvard faculty members. There he observed the intimate gatherings of men who seemed to him to be so "singularly segregated and limited in interest" as to possess "almost the qualities of a monastic order." To the future Harvard professor his predecessors appeared "contented with their own little world of academic problems and detached from politics and trade. . . ."[2] Cambridge contrasted starkly with Boston's concern for money and profit, and the boy early became aware of the rift between these two cities. His childhood impressions may explain in part his later endeavors to bridge the gulf separating the life of the mind and the religious spirit from the ways of the world.

The selection of a college presented no problem to the Boston-bred youth. Harvard was the logical choice, and Peabody enrolled with the class of 1869. Four years of college and a subsequent three-year course in the Divinity School did not change his verdict on Harvard professors. He was aware, of course, that he enjoyed "the presence of distinguished men." But a uniform, prescribed curriculum, daily recitations, and compulsory attendance at classes and chapel services conspired to dull the enthusiasm of both college teachers and students. To Peabody it seemed as though professors merely tolerated the presence of their students. Of intellectual stimulation there was none. Things were no better at

[1] For German evaluations of Peabody see Baumgarten in Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 2nd ed. (Tübingen, 1930), IV, 1054, and Christliche Welt, Dec. 1, 1898, pp. 1131–1134. On Peabody's place in the Social Gospel movement see his Reminiscences of Present-Day Saints (Boston and New York, 1927), pp. 117 f.

[2] Quotations are from Peabody's Harvard in the Sixties: A Boy's Eye View (Cambridge, 1935), p. 19, and A Little Boy in Little Boston (Cambridge, 1935), passim.

the Divinity School. Here thought was retarded, the intellectual atmosphere "unexhilerating to breathe," and "the fresh breeze of modern thought rarely penetrated the lecture rooms. . . ."[3]

While orthodox Unitarianism prevailed at the Divinity School, Francis Bowen taught Scottish common-sense philosophy at the College. A conservative Unitarian, Bowen lectured on moral philosophy which he based on an anti-sensational, non-idealistic epistemology, strongly colored by rationalism and the anti-utilitarian ethics of his faith. Duty derived through intuitive insight and rationally expounded was the key word of Bowen's moral teaching. When Peabody graduated in 1869 Harvard had not yet become the hospitable haven for idealism and pragmatism. This was to happen only after Bowen's retirement in 1889 when "Harvard philosophy was in the hands of his enemies."[4]

Instruction at the Divinity School during the early seventies was barely emerging from the rationalistic, non-evangelical theology which mirrored faithfully the majority doctrinal position of the 1865 National Convention of Unitarian Churches in New York. Conservative Unitarians there had upheld the unique significance of Christ's death and resurrection, the Bible as the revelation of God, the special witness of miracles, and the distinction between a created world and God, its Creator. The transcendental heresies of an Emerson and a Parker who stressed the authority of nature as revelation and the humanity of Christ, found clandestine reception among the students, yet they were not tolerated by the official guardians of Divinity School thought. Changes, however, were in the offing, and with the appointment of Charles Carroll Everett in 1869, idealistic philosophy made its entry. Emerson still was *persona non grata* at the Divinity School, yet in the College he gave a graduate course on "The Natural History of the Intellect" during the academic year of 1869–1870.[5]

Emerson's lecturing at the College was the result of another event that was to usher in a new age for the University. Charles

[3] See Harvard in the Sixties, p. 31, and Reminiscences, p. 65.

[4] G. H. Williams, ed., The Harvard Divinity School (Boston, 1954), p. 88. For a thorough discussion of the academic moral philosophers see Wilson Smith, Professors & Public Ethics (Ithaca, 1956), in particular ch. IX.

[5] This discussion of theological instruction at the Divinity School draws heavily on Sydney E. Ahlstrom, "The Middle Period (1840–1880)," in Williams, ed., op. cit. On Everett see n. 16, infra.

William Eliot had become president of Harvard in the year of Peabody's graduation. One of Eliot's changes was the introduction of graduate lecture courses in philosophy and literature. In Peabody's words these courses constituted the "germ of the graduate school," although we might describe them more aptly as Harvard's version of a university extension program. The philosophy course consisted of series of lectures delivered by Harvard professors and outside speakers. Francis Bowen, John Fiske, Charles Sanders Peirce, and Ralph Waldo Emerson contributed to the program.[6]

Here, then, was a new departure, and Peabody avidly seized the opportunity to enliven his studies at the Divinity School. He absorbed and delighted in the spiritualized evolutionism of John Fiske, and he embraced the transcendental heresies of Emerson. The sage of Concord confirmed Peabody's aversion to the "arid rationalism" of conservative Unitarianism and made Peabody a life-long foe of orthodoxy.[7] Of Peirce's lectures on the British logicians, Peabody seems to have carried away no more than a bewildered impression of columns of logical symbols and witty syllogisms circulating among the students. His inability to appreciate the originality of the father of pragmatism may have been due in part to Peabody's unfamiliarity with the language and concepts of natural science. Peirce's discourses on logic together with his original concepts of probabilism and tychism remained incomprehensible to the young theologian. If Peabody carried away from Peirce's lectures a faint suggestion of the trend towards the doctrine of relativity in science, Peirce's efforts may not have been altogether lost to the future preacher of the Social Gospel.[8]

[6] See Peabody, "The Germ of the Graduate School," Harvard Graduates Magazine, XXVII (Dec., 1918), 176–181. The Harvard University Archives also preserve Peabody's notes taken in the philosophical course.

[7] For Peabody's appreciation of Emerson's mysticism see his "Ralph Waldo Emerson and the Doctrine of Divine Immanence," in Pioneers of Religious Liberty in America (Boston, 1903), pp. 307–339.

[8] Peirce's terms probabilism and fallibilism are meant to substitute a concept of scientific laws as based on contingency and statistical probability for the older view of scientific laws as mechanically determined. Tychism was thinking that admitted chance. Both probabilism and tychism imply "that people cannot attain absolute certainty concerning questions of fact." See Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce, eds. Hartshorne and Weiss (Cambridge, 1931), I, 59, and cf. Philip P. Wiener's discussion of Peirce in Evolution and the Founders of Pragmatism (Cambridge, 1949), ch. 4 and p. 200.

In 1872, however, it was from Peirce's "synechism," his doctrine of continuity as the evolutionary growth of reasonableness, that Peabody could derive immediate meaning. Peirce's synechism provided a link to the evolution of Fiske; and evolution, derived from scientific analysis and applied to the history of thought and religion, was, after all, the challenging new doctrine of the time. To theologians the general notion of evolution had brought the new criticism of the historical school. From it as well as from the transcendental idealism of the liberal Unitarians all roads led back to Germany. So it came to pass that Peabody, having just received his B.D. diploma and having been married to Cora Weld, decided to go with his bride on the scholar's pilgrimage to Germany. He wanted to see for himself "whether the gods of German theology were infallible, or whether they might sometimes nod."[9]

II

The young couple presently learned that Germany was no synonym for transcendental idealism, as they had concluded from their previous exposure to German thought. Heidelberg drove them away with its "arid rationalism," and Leipzig disappointed them through its "repelling . . . defensive orthodoxy." But at the University of Halle Peabody found what he was looking for in the mediating theology of Professor Tholuck. Here, in the academic year of 1872–1873, began Peabody's "lifelong association with German thought" and here the foundation was laid for his future work which was to be "in large part [the] application of German learning" to American Unitarian theology and religiously motivated social service. But, whatever Peabody may have meant by "German learning," it should be understood that insofar as a particular set of fundamental tenets shaped his theology, these were inspired primarily by the religious faith of his teacher and friend, Friedrich August Gottreu Tholuck, and the scholarly investigations of Professor Otto Pfleiderer.[10]

In 1826 the Prussian Ministry for Cultural Affairs had transferred Tholuck from Berlin to Halle. Tholuck had been selected

[9] Reminiscences, p. 68.
[10] Quotations from Reminiscences, pp. 69–71.

to counteract that very same rationalism and, to a lesser degree, that orthodox supernaturalism which Peabody still encountered in 1872 at Heidelberg and Leipzig.[11] German theological rationalism of the nineteenth century rejected a literal interpretation of scriptures and, in time, developed a pantheism which claimed the authority of science for its basis. Religious supernaturalism, on the other hand, accepted the existence of supernatural realities, and held them to be unexplainable by science and accessible to man only through adherence to a revealed faith. If the rationalists placed an overriding emphasis on the "new criticism" emanating from the historical school, the defenders of supernaturalism either belittled the historical method as insufficient for the defense of religion, or they denounced it as heretical.

With Tholuck the Prussian authorities had chosen a theologian who was known for his antipathy toward rationalism, and who was skilled in applying the methods of historical research to theological studies. Moreover, his fame as an inspired minister of the Gospel had earned him a reputation as a disciple of Schleiermacher. The latter's mediating theology had stressed the compatibility of a spiritualized Christian faith with the demands of unfettered, independent scholarship. In much the same spirit Tholuck berated the "meager commonplaces of so-called common sense," and censured the Hegelians for their "eccentric intellectualism and crude manipulation of history."[12] His respect for scholarship and his mystical spiritualism led him to oppose the supernaturalism of Germany's protestant orthodoxy. His appearance at Halle immediately placed him at the center of violent and often virulent controversies for the better part of two decades. By the time of Peabody's arrival, however, Tholuck had won his battles and had gained the acclaim and veneration of his students and his congregations.

Tholuck's desire to illuminate the findings of scholarly research by a spiritualized Christian faith, his demonstration "that the

[11] For a detailed account of the motivations of the Prussian authorities in appointing Tholuck at Halle and of the determined resistance of the local theological faculty against Tholuck's acceptance see Leopold Witte, Das Leben D. Friedrich August Gotttreu Tholuck's (Bielefeld and Leipzig, 1884), I, 411–452.

[12] In Die Glaubwürdigkeit der Evangelischen Geschichte, 2nd ed. (Hamburg, 1838), pp. 9 and viii.

vocation of a scholar has room in it for humane and individualized beneficence," attracted Peabody to his German teacher-confessor. Despite Tholuck's professions that scholarship was indispensable to sound religion, his own ministry was characterized by an appeal to the heart rather than to the mind. His preaching was "childlike in its simplicity and florid rather than restrained. It was not surprising," reported Peabody later, "that Pietists heard him more willingly than scholars and that his congregations held more women than men." What endeared Tholuck to Peabody was the Emersonian strain of "inspired piety and learning" in Tholuck's teaching. As Emerson had condemned book learning and thoughtless adherence to rituals which had become meaningless, so Tholuck had foresworn the lifeless logic of rationalism and the stifling rites of orthodoxy. Tholuck, Peabody concluded, "was at heart a mystic. . . ." For Peabody the mystic's insight into the divine will constituted the ultimate gift of grace. Without it the emotions and the mind remained earthbound and dead to the Spirit, and theology suffered routinization and decline.[13]

The writings of Otto Pfleiderer, professor of theology at the University of Berlin, introduced Peabody to the scientific-historical approach of theological scholars to the phenomena of religion. Peabody early came across Pfleiderer's Die Religion, ihr Wesen und ihre Geschichte, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1869). He was impressed by the German's application of psychology to the subject of piety. Psychology here explained the manifestations of religious feelings in man, and prepared the ground for philosophy and history to begin their respective tasks of interpretation and verification.[14] With the introspective turn of the psychological approach to religion as the starting point for the philosophy of religion, German theological scholarship had become, in Peabody's view, far superior to the dull common-sense realism of Anglo-American theology. Psychology demonstrated the importance of strong emotional receptiveness for the message of religion. A clear and

[13] From Reminiscences, pp. 89, 80, 69, and 81. Cf. also article on Tholuck in Die Religion, 2nd ed., V, 1149 f., and Pfleiderer's evaluation of Tholuck in Die Entwicklung der Protestantischen Theologie (Freiburg i. B., 1891), pp. 188–193.

[14] On Pfleiderer see Die Religion, 2nd ed., IV, 1156 f., and Peabody, "History of the Psychology of Religion," Unitarian Review, XIV (Aug. and Sept., 1880), 97–109, and 193–211.

trained mind was required to interpret and articulate the message received. Scholarship, as proved by Pfleiderer and Tholuck, need not destroy piety and faith. In the manner of these German scholars, then, Peabody wanted to bring back to America an academic theology which would set to rest the conflict between a religion of the mind and a religion of the spirit.

III

After his return to the United States in 1873 Peabody spent several months at Antioch, Ohio, and at Boston. In April of 1874 he was ordained minister at the First Parish in Cambridge, and during his fourth year at the parish he was elected an overseer of Harvard College. In that capacity he pleaded in 1879 for a closer association between the Divinity School and the College and urged that the elective system of the College be extended to the Divinity School. Students of either institution were to be permitted to take courses in both of them.[15]

The year immediately following his election as an overseer of Harvard College was marred by frequent illness. In search of better health Peabody resigned from his parish and travelled in Southern Europe, North Africa, and California. In the fall of 1880 he was called to the Harvard Divinity School to lecture on ethics and homiletics, and in the next year he was appointed Parkman Professor of Theology. Thus, what first had appeared to have been the end of a career, was but a new beginning. A fresh field was opened to the now thirty-two-year-old theologian, and, as it turned out, provided an unexcelled opportunity for him to make effective the results of study and contemplation in an environment in which their impact would not be lost.

Peabody joined the faculty of the Divinity School in the third year of Everett's deanship.[16] The narrow Unitarian denominationalism of his own student days was giving way before the gathering of a multi-denominational faculty. Soon there were to be eight different Protestant denominations represented among the

[15] See Report of the Committee to Visit the Divinity School in 1879 (Cambridge, 1879), 12 pp.

[16] Everett, who became dean in 1878, was a student of German philosophy, particularly of Fichte and Hegel, and an admirer of transcendentalism.

teaching staff of the Divinity School.[17] Hebrew was made an elective subject, and in time philanthropy and social service were included in the curriculum. Under Dean Everett the idealism of the neo-Hegelians together with the "scientific" theology of the historical school began to dominate Divinity School thinking. As one student of the school's history stated: "Everett . . . did for Divinity School theology what George Herbert Palmer and Josiah Royce did for Harvard philosophy, and what hundreds of other thinkers, lesser and greater, did in most of the institutions of higher learning in the land."[18] Thus neo-Hegelianism succeeded finally in completing the victory of transcendentalism over the old Unitarian orthodoxy. But in the process it lost the aggressive vigor of the Transcendentalists and quickly settled down into a defensive formalism of its own.

Throughout the eighties and nineties the neo-Hegelians within the Unitarian fold condemned the materialism of the industrial revolution, its unashamed hunger for profits, its veneration of worldly success, and its exploitation of the economically weak by the financially strong. They warned that science and technology were threatening to become substitutes for religion and ethics, and they fought furiously the desertion of Francis Ellingwood Abbot's Free Religionists from the fold of the Unitarian Church.[19] Thus hemmed in by the remnants of conservatism on the one hand and by *laissez-faire* economics and free religion on the other, the philosophical idealists of the Divinity School were inclined to be cautious in word and action lest they unwittingly aid one of their foes by striking out against another. Soon Peabody was to show whether his zest for inquiry and action would tolerate the quasi-apologetic tone of his colleagues; whether he would, in the fashion

[17] Reminiscences, p. 121.

[18] See Ahlstrom, op. cit., pp. 138 ff., passim. Levering Reynolds, Jr., ibid., p. 167, n. 6, tells us that of the six Divinity School professors in the eighties and nineties, five had studied in Germany and were disciples of the historical school and of philosophical idealism.

[19] Stow Persons, Free Religion: An American Faith (New Haven, 1947), p. 75, characterized the Free Religious Association as "a sort of mutual protective society for these dissenters who would not submit to the yoke of Christ, as prescribed by the National Unitarian Conference." Peabody rejected their Religion of Humanity because "the legitimate object is eliminated while the sentiment of worship is retained. . . ." In "The Methods of the Psychology of Religion," Unitarian Review XIX (April, 1883), 323.

of Tholuck, remain a harmonizer of reason and emotion, of mind and spirit, or would break the bonds of convention and strike out into new fields.

As lecturer in ethics, Peabody's first concern was to free his subject from its bondage to metaphysics, and to place it on the basis of inductive inquiry. He introduced the "case method" of the Law School to the study of social problems. He preferred to deal with the hard facts of life rather than with the subtleties of metaphysicians. Inductive ethics was to be accompanied by a revival of theological study which, likewise, was to proceed by induction. Following Pfleiderer, Peabody held that the beginning was to be made with the obvious presence of the religious sentiment in man. Here, Peabody wrote, "is a fact capable of observation, ready for analysis, open to verification."[20] Psychology would lead the student from man, the subject of the religious sentiment, to God, its object. "Just as in physics," he wrote, "we now go from the earth to heaven, and not reversed."[21]

This scientific study, however, stood in continual need of spiritual illumination from the sources of the Christian faith. Only when thus illumined could it yield its ripest fruit in social service.[22] The requirements for Christian service in the modern world were therefore listed by Peabody as a revival of theological study, loyalty to the spirit of Jesus Christ, and — somewhat incongruously — a conservative character suspicious of external schemes for social salvation and opposed to cheap suggestions of popular visionaries.[23] Charity had to rest upon religious faith, and had to be made effective through scientific application of relief. In terms of theology, Peabody concluded, works were the outgrowth of faith, and faith was to be proved by works.[24]

By 1883 Peabody offered a course in inductive ethics to students of both the Divinity School and the College. The catalogue

[20] "The Method of the Psychology of Religion," Unitarian Review, XIX (March, 1883), 254.

[21] "The New Theology," ibid., XI (April, 1879), 369.

[22] Cf. his review of "Janet's Theory of Morals," Science, March 21, 1884, pp. 360–362.

[23] In "The Thirst for the Living God," King's Chapel, Sermons on Great Themes, Special Series No. 1 (Boston, 1886), 17 pp. Also as AUA Tract, Fourth Series, No. 126 (Boston, n.d.).

[24] "Liberal Christianity and the Spirit of Worship," Unitarian Review, XVIII (Nov., 1882), 387 ff.

listed his lectures as "Studies of practical problems: Temperance, Charity, Labor, Prison Discipline, Divorce, etc."[25] Among students it was better known as "Peabo's drainage, drunkenness, and divorce."[26] Later, upon suggestion of William James, the official name was changed to "Social Ethics," and out of it eventually grew the Department of Social Ethics in the College. By presenting his lectures in 1883 Peabody is said to have been the first American theologian to introduce the subject of social reform into a divinity school curriculum.[27] The social ethics course established his fame as one of the academic pioneers of the Social Gospel in America.

In June of 1886 Peabody was appointed the Plummer Professor of Christian Morals at Harvard University. He was now a member of the faculties of both the College and the Divinity School, and he was charged with the instruction of college freshmen and seniors in Christian ethics and religious philosophy. He also became the head of the College Church and, subsequently, chairman of the Board of Preachers to the University. His first decisive action in his new post was to propose the abolition of the daily compulsory chapel attendance. This move was a daring undertaking, since it struck at the root of long-standing convictions on the part of colleagues, overseers, and parents who were deeply committed to the belief that compulsory chapel attendance was the only way of perpetuating the ideals and goals of a Christian education. Ralph Waldo Emerson, hardly a defender of traditionalism, disapproved of the proposal. Yet Peabody's success was assured once he managed to change the mind of his colleague Phillips Brooks. To President Eliot, Peabody described the plan as a logical extension of the elective system to the religious life of the college. The voluntary attendance at chapel services, Peabody held, made the experience of religion a privilege rather than an obligation. It represented proof of "the power of religion, and . . . faith in the impulses of young men."[28] As practiced under Peabody and his

[25] The Harvard University Catalogue, 1883–84 (Cambridge, 1883), p. 87.

[26] Quoted by Reynolds, op. cit., p. 180.

[27] In James Dombrowski, The Early Days of Christian Socialism in America (New York, 1936), p. 63.

[28] "Religion in the University," Unitarian Review, XXX (July, 1888), 55. See also Peabody, "Six Years of Voluntary Chapel," Harvard Monthly, XV (Oct., 1892),

colleagues of the Board of Preachers to the University, the new policy improved greatly the quality of academic preaching and invigorated the religious appreciation of the students.[29]

In the meantime Peabody's Social Ethics course continued to attract students from both the College and the Divinity School. Peabody roamed far and wide across the manifold aspects of the "Social Question." He appraised industrial coöperation as a moral movement which contrasted favorably with the revolutionary spirit of the Socialists.[30] He saw in experiments with labor colonies for tramps, a practical application of brotherly love which, in Germany at least avoided the socialistic pitfall of state supervision.[31] He disapproved, however, of German municipal reforms because they tended "to weaken the self-confidence and self-respect of the people."[32] He admonished rich men to practice the virtues of self-control, energy, patience, and foresight to prove themselves worthy of the trust they had been given.[33] By 1894 Peabody had become convinced that a state-controlled system of deporting vagrants to labor colonies was desirable to remedy what he termed "this fearful downdraft" which city life produced upon its "inefficient citizens." Every citizen owed a moral duty to his community to contribute to the common good. "If that is socialism," Peabody wrote, "let us make the most of it. It is also the hope of stable civilization and the secret of judicious charity."[34]

During the 1890's Peabody undertook several journeys to familiarize himself with social problems and relief methods in Europe and the Near East. In 1890 he was made a trustee of the Hampton Institute in Virginia, a vocational school for Negroes, and

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1–9, and his "Voluntary Worship, 1886–1929," in S. E. Morison, ed., The Development of Harvard University (Cambridge, 1930), pp. li–lviii.

[29] For examples of Harvard preaching under the voluntary system see Harvard Vespers (Boston, 1888), and Peabody's sermons, Mornings in the College Chapel (Boston and New York, 1896), Afternoons in the College Chapel (1898), Mornings in the College Chapel, 2nd Series (1907), Sunday Evenings in the College Chapel (1911), and Sunday Evenings in College Chapels Since the War (1921), all of which but the last also appeared in German translations.

[30] "Industrial Co-operation in England," Forum, VIII (Nov., 1889), 274–285.

[31] "The German Labor-Colonies for Tramps," ibid., XII (Feb., 1892), 751–761.

[32] "A Case for Good City Government," ibid., XIII (March, 1892), 53.

[33] "The Problem of Rich Men," Christian Register, Jan. 5, 1893, pp. 4–5.

[34] "Colonization as a Remedy for City Poverty," Forum, XVII (March, 1894), 59–61, passim. See also "Developing the Social Up-Draught," Charities Review, VI (July and Aug., 1897), 413–419.

in 1896 he helped found the Prospect Union of Cambridge, Massachusetts. This Union, organized as an evening college for workingmen after the pattern of English university settlements, was, in Peabody's view, "the last [latest?] and best method of philanthropy — the method of residence among the poor and of the contagion of the better life." He described its goals as "education for one's self, fraternity for one's neighbor, good citizenship for the common welfare. . . ." The student editors of the Prospect Union Review found a shorter and more incisive way of expressing their ideals. The French battle-cry of 1789 adorned the masthead of their publication. The spirit of an academic "revolution" was at large in the yard, and Peabody could point to its results with justifiable pride.[35]

IV

It would be wrong to conclude from the foregoing account of Peabody's involvement in the Social Gospel that he was merely another representative of the 1890 variety of American social reformers. He was a theologian by profession, and he insisted that a theologian be guided by the canons of scientific scholarship. As he had previously stated that a proper beginning of the study of religion ought to be made with man, so he taught that theology began with man's need as an individual to open himself to the problems of his fellow-men. "The beginning is individual, the aim is social," Peabody wrote. "The way to make a good world is, first of all, to be good one's self. First character, then charity. First life, then love."[36]

The source of character and life was to be found in the person of Christ. For centuries Christians had interpreted the gospel solely as a message to individuals. Now, when the Social Gospel stressed social salvation rather than individual regeneration, Pea-

[35] See his "Universities and the Workingman," The Prospect Union Review, Nov. 6, 1895, p. 3; "Aims and Work of the Prospect Union" ibid., March 21, 1894, p. 1. For an account of "The Work of the Prospect Union," see R. E. Ely's article in Publications of the Church Social Union, no. 31, Nov. 15, 1896, 24 pp.

[36] "Charity and Character," Proceedings, 23rd Annual Session of the National Conference of Charities and Correction (Boston, 1896), n.p. See also "Christianity and the Social Question," in The World's Parliament of Religions, ed. J. H. Barrows (Chicago, 1893), II, 1024–1030.

body insisted once more on the teachings of Christ to men as individuals rather than as members of groups. On this point he parted company with the Christian Socialists. "Jesus is, indeed, not a social system maker," he repeated over and over again. "His message to manhood was not of the mechanism of society, but of the character and capacity and destiny of the human soul."[37] Inspiration, not organization, had been the mission of Christ.

In his Jesus Christ and the Social Question (New York and London, 1900) Peabody set forth his views on the applicability of Christ's teaching to modern society. The book represented Peabody's long-awaited first major work. When it appeared in the author's fifty-third year, it met with immediate acclaim, and was soon translated into German, French, and Swedish. The book did not contain any strikingly new thesis, but summarized the conclusions of Peabody's evolving social thought. It reiterated that "the social questions are, in their main scope and intent, manifestations of the moral life of the time," and that in the last analysis the social question is a question of ethics. "Not alms, but a friend," was Peabody's own way of stating that the methods of modern charity coincided with those of Christ.[38]

In his scholarly writing Peabody returned to the problem of his teachers: How to overcome the old antithesis of mind and spirit, of Hegel and Schleiermacher, of Unitarian orthodoxy and transcendental liberalism. As his social reformism had led him back to the character and message of Jesus Christ, so his formal theology likewise revolved around the character of Christ. For Peabody the will to obey divine commands was Christ's outstanding characteristic. In Hegelian fashion Peabody overcame the polarity of mind and spirit by an appeal to the will.[39] This voluntaristic interpretation allowed him to retain the subjective premises of the idealistic tradition and to accommodate the American deference to individualism. "To follow Jesus even though one does not understand him; to do the will even if one has not learned the doctrine; to perceive through much darkness that the life is the light of

[37] "The Message of Christ to Human Society," in The Message of Christ to Manhood (Boston and New York, 1899), pp. 59–61, passim.

[38] Quotations are from pp. 346 and 247.

[39] Peabody here reformulated an approach which had been used by Pfleiderer and Everett before him, and which was based on the voluntaristic idealism of Fichte.

man; — these are the marks of the new obedience. . . ."[40] If Christianity was to mean anything to contemporary society it must seek its strength in the person of Jesus, rather than in the dogma of the churches. Peabody could hardly have enunciated a doctrine more congenial to the inclinations of his countrymen.

Peabody's training as a theologian and his upbringing in the Unitarian tradition of rational religion prevented him from concluding that theology proper is a concern of the past, unsuited to the modern age. Rather, he thought it likely that "a movement which begins in attachment to a character may end in richer philosophical discriminations and broader religious views."[41] Such a movement would avoid the pitfalls of lifeless rationalism and sentimental emotionalism, and would impress upon believers the qualities of serenity and reserve, composure and steadiness of character. Rational, spiritual, ethical discipleship would be the outward expression of a faith which was sustained by "the third function of spiritual expression, the will."[42]

If the will to obey was held to be a Christian's first obligation, then it followed that sin consisted in the weakness of the will rather than in the weakness of the flesh. Peabody thus found that Jesus had placed minor emphasis on the discipline of the body, but had condemned severely the sins of worldliness, intellectual hypocrisy and self-sufficiency, the "disease of self-importance" and "the spiritual satiety of the Pharisaic mind."[43] These being the gravest sins, humility and a willingness to learn were the prime virtues of a Christian. The academic environment, the Unitarian stress on reason, the German emphasis on scholarship, the view of growth and development as a process of continuous education, — all these factors conspired to prompt Peabody's definition of the

[40] "The Character of Jesus Christ," Hibbert Journal, I (July, 1903), 641–642.

[41] Ibid., 645.

[42] Jesus Christ and the Christian Character (New York and London, 1905), p. 97. — Seeing in serenity and composure the evidences of Christian discipleship Peabody rejected the twice-born conception of piety of his "distinguished and beloved colleague" William James. James, Peabody felt, could not and did not account in his Varieties of Religious Experience for the "healthy-minded" character of Jesus. Peabody expressed hope that James "may be led from this fascinating discussion of the pathology of religion to the interpretation of its normal, heroic, rational, dynamic types." In "The Character of Jesus Christ," op. cit. 651–652, n. 1. See also The Religion of an Educated Man (New York and London, 1903), pp. 10–11.

[43] Jesus Christ and the Christian Character, p. 79 and passim.

religion of Jesus as a religion of education. The Nicodemus of the Gospel of John became Peabody's exemplary Christian scholar. "Step by step the mind of the educated man has moved," wrote Peabody, "from criticism to sympathy, from sympathy to sacrifice, until at last, precisely when many an untrained mind takes flight, it is the scholar who brings the rational offering of service as his answer to the message of Christ."[44] From the will to obey, the scholar's inspired study leads to the will to serve. The will to serve thus becomes the highest testimony of Christian discipleship. In his ethics of service and in his theology of the educated man lies Peabody's academic contribution to the theology of the Social Gospel.

V

Peabody's introduction of courses on philanthropy at Harvard University received unexpected recognition as a courageous venture of scholarship from the citadel of higher learning in the Western World. In the winter semester 1905–1906 the Harvard theologian was asked to deliver a lecture course on the Ethics of the Social Question at the University of Berlin. In accepting, Peabody became the first regular American exchange professor in Germany.

In his inaugural address on October 30, 1905, he recounted his early experiences as a student in Germany. After paying tribute to Tholuck and acknowledging the permanent influence on himself of the voluntaristic idealism of Fichte and the spiritualism of Schleiermacher, Peabody turned to his main theme: the necessity for scholarship to investigate in a non-partisan, scientific manner the social, industrial, and political problems of the time. When in conclusion he pointed to the resulting beneficial relatedness of the scholar to the world of affairs, he could be assured of having gratified the assembled scholars and statesmen. While they may have wondered at the boldness and even rashness with which this American theologian moved from bimetallism and tariff-reform —

[44] The Religion of an Educated Man, pp. 15 and 60. See also Peabody's sermon on Nicodemus in Harvard Vespers. Peabody derived his religion of education from Lessing's deistic treatise on Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechtes and from Bushnell's Nurture.

subjects traditionally regarded by German scholars as a proper field of inquiry — to settlement houses and temperance — fields which in Germany had been assigned to administrators and clergymen — they took deep satisfaction in Peabody's announcement that no less than twenty-two of his Harvard colleagues had obtained their Doctor of Philosophy degree at German universities.[45] In subsequent lectures Peabody paid tribute to German theology and philosophy as inspiring contributions to American thought. He traced the influence of the early German pietists in Pennsylvania; he alluded to the scholarship of Ticknor, Everett, and Bancroft, and he stressed the philosophy of Kant, Schelling, Fichte, and Schleiermacher as foundation stones of the American Unitarianism of Channing, Parker, and Emerson.[46]

Peabody's German lectures, sermons, and addresses were received with delighted surprise and acclaim by students and professors in the universities as well as by lay groups and congregations. The Germans were surprised to find their notion of American materialism corrected by Peabody's documentation of the idealistic strain in American religious and secular philanthropy. They were delighted to meet in Peabody a devout and yet highly educated individual with whom they felt a community of heart, mind, and spirit. They admitted shame for having had to wait for an American to come and lecture on the social implications of Christianity.[47] The German theologians hailed Peabody as the bridge-builder between German theology and the American "religion of an educated man," even though an occasional critic questioned the legitimacy of the American's concern with "direct practical applications."[48] Peabody could well be gratified by the response he evoked from his German audience.

He was acutely aware of the extremely friendly reception he was accorded by the scholars and dignitaries of the Prussian capital, so much so that he questioned their sincerity. He de-

[45] Akademische Gegenseitigkeit (Giessen, 1905), 39 pp. The address was reprinted in translation as "Academic Reciprocity," in Harvard Graduates Magazine, XIV (March, 1906), 365–377.

[46] See "Was verdanken wir Amerikaner der Theologie Deutschlands?", typescript, filed at the Unitarian Historical Library, Boston.

[47] See W. L. F., in Christliche Welt, Feb. 22, 1906, pp. 186–187, and Helene von Dungern, "Zukunftsmusik," ibid., June 1, 1906, p. 544.

[48] See Die Religion, 2nd ed., IV, 1054, and 1st ed., IV, 1343.

plored the exaggeration of what he considered to be "an academic interlude" into a gesture of international friendship of high political significance, which, as he suspected, "might in some degree promote the ambitious schemes of Germany. . . . Nothing less than this larger intention would seem to justify the extra-academic courtesies of statesmen, journalists, directors of theatres and opera, and officers, in the Army and Navy," he wrote. Peabody feared that behind this lavish show of hospitality lay but "the desire of Germany for a larger place in the world's affairs, and hope of cooperation with the United States. . . ."[49]

There can be little doubt today that Peabody's suspicions were justified to a degree. We know of the Kaiser's desire for friendship with the United States to offset the diplomatic pressure he feared from England. That his efforts to pursue his diplomatic intentions through academic middle-men were doomed to failure from the very beginning could have been evident to any student of comparative sociology. American scholars had no means of influencing the policies of their country comparable to those available to German professors. Yet this fact was sometimes overlooked by American exchange professors in Berlin, as for example by the Columbia political scientist John W. Burgess in 1906–07. His attempt to play the rôle of President Roosevelt's ambassador *extraordinaire* brought upon him the condemnation of the American press and of the President himself.[50] It is to Peabody's credit that he refused to let himself be drawn into such a game of international politics and to assume a rôle for which he as professor possessed neither authorization nor experience.

Still, Peabody's suspicions seem to have been aroused unduly. Despite his early acquaintance with German academic life, Peabody was unprepared to accept the immense social prestige that he enjoyed solely by being a professor of America's oldest and

[49] "An Academic Interlude," Harvard Alumni Bulletin (April, 1935), 790.

[50] Burgess created the impression of conveying President Roosevelt's views when, in his inaugural lecture, he denounced the Monroe doctrine as obsolete and called for massive Teutonic immigration to Latin America. In a private letter Roosevelt termed Burgess's views "hopelessly wrongheaded," and the New York Times called Burgess "a missionary of mischief." See Morison, et al., The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt (Cambridge, 1952), V, 645, and Current Literature, XLI (Dec., 1906), 611–615. For other evidence of the tactlessness of later American exchange professors at Berlin see editorial in The Nation, March 30, 1911.

most famous university. The scholar in the Germany of William II belonged to the élite of the nation. The respect given to him far exceeded that accorded to the college teacher in the United States. If we remember also that Peabody's exchange appointment was the first of its kind, it seems no longer necessary to speak, as Peabody did, of "the exaggerated and unbounded hospitality which met the Harvard guest."[51] The hospitality shown was intended to honor Peabody, the man and scholar. To an even greater degree, however, it was to show respect for his office, his position, and his university.

VI

Back at Harvard in the spring of 1906 Peabody sought to establish the Department of Social Ethics on a solid, scholarly base. Faithful to his principle of inductive science he collected reports, charts, and photographs to illustrate social problems and charity methods from all over the world. In 1907 he reported the opening of a Social Museum which was to place the study of practical philanthropy upon a scientific basis.[52] Since his German experience had underscored once more the indispensability of philosophical-theological study for social work, Peabody sounded "the Call to Theology" in the January issue of the Harvard Theological Review of 1908. In this essay he warned that the "passion for service had supplanted the passion for truth," that piety and efficiency could never substitute for the powers of thought.

To be sure, Peabody did not mean to return to the formal theology of "the Pharisaic mind." What he wanted was to articulate and define the philosophical and theological underpinnings on which to rest his demand for a religion of spiritual insight. Peabody had become suspicious of the new science of sociology and he rejected the spiritual barrenness of pure science.[53] Nor did the

[51] "An Academic Interlude," p. 790.

[52] James Ford covers the history of the Social Ethics Department in S. E. Morison, ed., op. cit., pp. 223–230. Peabody's reports on the Social Museum are contained in the Publications of the Department of Social Ethics in Harvard University, nos. 1 and 4 (Feb., 1908 and 1911). Another report had first appeared in the Internationale Wochenschrift (Berlin, Nov. 23, 1907).

[53] See The Approach to the Social Question (New York, 1909), p. 51, and "The Recall to Theology," Yale Review, n.s., XII (Jan., 1923), 324.

pragmatism of his friend and colleague William James meet Peabody's demand for spiritual insight. James seemed to Peabody to be too much concerned with individual psychology and the pathology of religion. Peabody felt that experience based on the observation of social life would have taught James that what mattered was not so much "the will to believe," but "the will to help." Inductive analysis of actual social conditions, Peabody insisted, would have to be carried to the eventual completion of a theological justification and demonstration of a religion of rational "healthy-mindedness."[54]

The religion of rational healthy-mindedness, however, carried overtones of shallowness and of an unwillingness to face the darker sides of social life and politics with honesty and determination. When Peabody counselled his students to "go slow" in social reform, he echoed the gradualism of his teacher John Fiske whose theory of the prolonged infancy of man implied a confident assertion that genuine human brotherhood was an attainable even though distant ideal in history. Peabody interpreted this theory to mean that the churches were to adapt their philanthropic activities to the existing stage of social development. Christ, Peabody never tired of pointing out, had not been in a hurry. The gradual but consistent efforts of education, legislation, and, above all, spiritualization were the agents of social progress.[55]

The belief in the irresistibility yet gradualness of progress never left Peabody. It was in line with his general social optimism and led him to belittle the sins of self-gratification and self-aggrandizement in business and industry as but regrettable incidents of a basically honorable way of life. Confronted with the dog-eat-dog practices of *laissez-faire* excesses, he sought to back up his optimism by convincing himself that industry was "essentially and on a vast scale an enterprise of social service." Similarly, he ar-

[54] The Approach, pp. 184 ff. — One implication of the theology of service was its repudiation of the eschatological doctrine of Christianity. For Peabody this repudiation could be summed up in one sentence: "There is nothing apocalyptic in the parable of the Good Samaritan. . . ." See his "New Testament Eschatology and New Testament Ethics," Harvard Theological Review, II (Jan., 1909), 50–57.

[55] See "'Going Slow' in Social Reform," The Cambridge Magazine, n.s., I (Feb. 1896), 23–25, and "The People," in Organized Labor and Capital (Philadelphia, 1904), pp. 187–226.

gued that in politics beneath "the operations of self-interest and intrigue a moral purpose may be . . . fulfilled."[56]

In much the same way Peabody interpreted the war of 1914 as a touchstone for a Christian's faith. For Europe the war represented "the awful Nemesis which follows a long series of moral wrongs."[57] To the United States, however, it offered the singular opportunity to prove "the conversion of militarism, the spiritualization of soldierliness, the Christianization of courage, the enlistment of good soldiers of Jesus Christ" as goals worthy of a Christian nation.[58] Once actively pursued, these goals would strengthen America's moral superiority and enable her to fulfill her task as "a judicial and unprejudiced tribunal for the great adjudication which must come."[59] Their traditional idealism would now enable Americans to be the peace-makers blessed by Jesus in the Beatitudes.[60]

This optimistic estimate of America's capacity for leadership in peace carried Peabody dangerously close to a simple identification of Christianity with American idealism. In the emotional disturbances of the war and post-war years, Americanization very nearly became a synonym for spiritualization.[61] Peabody, the preacher, here outdistanced Peabody, the scholar. It was then with his The Apostle Paul and the Modern World in 1923 and with his essay "The Recall to Theology" in the Yale Review of

[56] The Christian Life in the Modern World (New York, 1914), pp. 95 and 184 f. Statements such as these prompted Sydney Kaplan to characterize Peabody as a teacher of "a kind of Bible Defense of Wage-Slavery. . . ." In "Taussig, James and Peabody: A 'Harvard School' in 1900?" American Quarterly, VII (Winter, 1955), 319.

[57] Occasionally Peabody alluded to the particular German responsibility for the war, as when in the Eleventh Report of the Class of 1869 (Cambridge, 1919), p. 217, he stated that his attendance at the Centenary of the University of Berlin in 1910 had been "the last chance for a self-respecting American Professor to associate himself with German university life." Generally, however, he stuck to his concept of the dignified, stable, but corrupt civilization of Europe *versus* the casual, disorderly but healthy democracy of the United States. See his "Americans Abroad," North American Review, CCI (March, 1915), 366–371, and his "The Religious Education of an American Child," Religious Education, X (April, 1915), 107–114.

[58] "The Conversion of Militarism," Biblical World, XLIV (Nov., 1914), 306.

[59] "Neutrality as an Opportunity," Nation, Dec. 17, 1914, p. 712.

[60] "The Peace-Makers," Harvard Theological Review, XII (Jan. 1919), 51–66.

[61] Cf. his How to Save the Soul of America, AUA Dept. of Social and Public Service, Soc. Serv. Bull. No. 39 (Boston, n.d.), 32 pp., and "The Theologian in a New World," Methodist Quarterly Review, LXIX (Oct., 1920), 621–632.

the same year that Peabody returned to a more sober and a far sounder discussion of theology.

VII

Peabody saw his "theology of service" as a direct application of the teaching of Jesus Christ to modern life. This Christ-centered theology inevitably brought him face to face with the question: "What thinkest thou of Paul?" Peabody had previously held that the apocalyptic interpretation had turned the New Testament upside down by proclaiming Paul rather than Jesus to be "the real founder of the Christian religion," and that in doing so, it had eliminated the ground for Christian ethics altogether. Still, Peabody was not willing simply to reverse the process and relegate Paulinian theology to a subordinate position.[62] This, he felt would be tantamount to banishing theology and to turning seminaries and churches into sociological laboratories, reform clubs, or socialist brotherhoods.[63] No one, he stated, could bypass the commanding figure of Paul, the Apostle. What needed to be done was to interpret Paulinian doctrine in the light of historical perspective.

Paul, Peabody declared, "a man of great intellectual gifts, passionate emotions, and untiring vitality," found himself committed to a cause which was "in danger of becoming provincial, racial, and restricted. . . ." His task was to deliver a burning message to an unconcerned world. His contemporaries knew Paul, the preacher, rather than Paul, the theologian. To them he was an emancipator who subordinated his own great intellectual powers to an inspired vision. Paul was the archetype of the inspired scholar who devoted his life to the service of his fellow-man. He was a mystic at heart and "the great forerunner of that long procession of idealists, poets, and transcendentalists, who have testified, in varied language and through different needs, to this immediate communion with the Eternal." As an intellectual, Peabody wrote, this mystic brought down, "as it were . . . the ideals of the Gospel to the

[62] "The Practicability of the Christian Life," Harvard Theological Review, VI (April, 1913), 131 f.

[63] "A New World and Its Religious Leaders," Religious Education, VII (Oct., 1912), p. 367 f.

level of discussion," and tested them "by prevailing rules of theology or ethics. . . ."[64]

For Peabody Paul thus fitted into the succession of mystics and scholars, which extended from Jesus to George Fox, Schleiermacher, Emerson, Tholuck, and William James. Peabody now had returned again to the theme of his early sermon on Nicodemus, to his "religion of an educated man," to his persistent mission of reconciling mind and emotions through the power of the Spirit which entered into man through man's willed obedience in the service of Christ.

Peabody's last attempt at a systematic expression of his theology was set forth in his Church of the Spirit (New York, 1925). His conciliatory theology here found expression in the proclamation of a universal catholic church of spiritual experience, in the community of the Saints as proclaimed in the Creed.[65] Peabody called back to memory the saintly figure of his beloved teacher Tholuck who once, when walking in his garden with the young Peabody, had exclaimed: "Ah, the Unitarians, they are mystics!" This impulsive reaction of a German theologian more than anything else had set the *leitmotif* for Peabody's theological endeavors. Looking back now on his lifelong association with the Unitarian church in America, Peabody sadly reflected that many Unitarians had failed to perceive the truth of this insight.[66] If the theology of the Social Gospel had all too often been endangered by emotional excess and neglect of scientific investigations, the Unitarians as a church had always been in danger of undervaluing emotional, spiritual worship and of falling prey to arid intellectualism.[67]

To correct both the fallacious tendencies in the Social Gospel and in American Unitarianism, Peabody had drawn consistently on the resources of German theology, stressing at different times the

[64] Quotations are from The Apostle Paul and the Modern World (New York, 1923), pp. 134 f., 176, 276.

[65] The universalism of the Church of the Spirit led Peabody to protest "The Call of the Bishops" of the Lambeth conference, because of its trinitarianism and its emphasis on baptism. In Hibbert Journal, XIX (Jan., 1921), 224–229.

[66] The Church of the Spirit (New York, 1926), p. 100.

[67] During the 1920's Peabody became alarmed by yet another kind of religious aberration, viz. the resurgence of Biblical literalism by the fundamentalists. See his "Recall to Theology," 326.

scholarly emphasis of the scientific-historical school, the mystical spiritualism of Schleiermacher and Tholuck, or the voluntaristic idealism of Fichte. As a messenger between countries and as a conciliator among theological schools, he had possessed neither the intention nor the power to develop an original theology. But with his scientific approach to the theology of the Social Gospel, Peabody had made his most important contribution.

The American Social Gospel movement of the eighteen eighties and nineties united Protestant church leaders, ministers and lay men with social scientists and social reformers. The Christian Socialists constituted the movement's radical wing. They attacked the existing economic and social order as un-Christian and demanded its replacement with a socialist state. While ministers and lay men were in the majority, the most influential group within the Social Gospel movement during its formative years was made up of social scientists, many of whom had studied in German and English universities. Most of them did not share the hopes of the Christian Socialists to alter radically the capitalistic system. But they firmly believed in the desirability of "scientific" reform through individual and state action.[68]

Peabody belonged to none of these groups. As a theologian he could not admit the leading rôle of science over religion in social reform. As a scholar he was too strongly imbued with the social conservatism of his Boston home and of the German historical school to tolerate the thought of revolution. To him the Social Gospel was a theological rather than a social movement. He recognized that it was born out of the economic and social dislocations of the industrial revolution, but he lamented what he considered its abuse by politicians and propagandists and by the "inventive minds" of social scientists.

Peabody's most important contribution thus was his introduction of social ethics as an academic subject into the curriculum of Harvard University. He subjected philanthropic social research to the scrutiny of scholarship and placed it upon empirical ob-

[68] See Sidney Fine, Laissez Faire and the General Welfare State (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1957), pp. 169–251, and W. A. Visser't Hooft, The Background of the Social Gospel in America (Haarlem, 1928).

servations and inductive study guided by a systematic theology.[69] He demonstrated that the importation of German scholarship to America need not stop with the acceptance of the historical method or the reiteration of Hegelian theories, and that the results of scholarly study could be applied creatively to contemporary social problems.

[69] A bibliography of Peabody's writings compiled by the author is scheduled to appear in the Proceedings of the Unitarian Historical Society for 1961.

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